

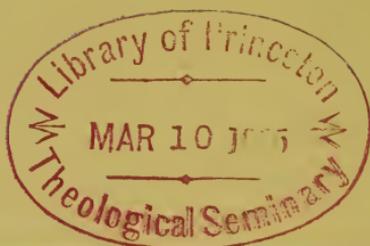
ON THE APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.

PAROCHIAL LECTURES.

SECOND SERIES.

BY WILLIAM J. IRONS, M.A.

Price 4s. 6d.



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Irons, William J. 1812-1883.
On the apostolical
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PAROCHIAL LECTURES.

(SECOND SERIES.)

BY

WILLIAM J. IRONS, B.D.,

INCUMBENT OF THE HOLY TRINITY, BROMPTON, MIDDLESEX.

LONDON:

JOSEPH MASTERS, 33, ALDERSGATE STREET.

MDCCCXLVII.

TO

EDWARD BOUVERIE PUSEY, D.D.

(LATE FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE)

CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH,

AND REGIUS PROFESSOR OF HEBREW

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD;

THIS VOLUME

(BY HIS PERMISSION)

IS PRESENTED; WITH A DEEP FEELING

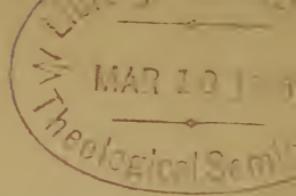
OF THE AUTHOR'S OBLIGATION

TO HIM

FOR THE BLESSINGS OF HIS LEARNED INSTRUCTION,

HIS CHRISTIAN EXAMPLE,

AND HIS HONEST FRIENDSHIP.



P R E F A C E.

VERY little needs to be said to introduce these Lectures to the reader. They were delivered in Advent last, at Saint Mary's, Newington; and there is the same reason for publishing, which there then was for writing and preaching them. I desire to assist, as far as I am able, those who are seeking to clear and define their thoughts, respecting the origin, nature, and power of the Christian Ministry. I have aimed only at plainness and fairness in the statement of the argument; and have adopted

that arrangement of the subject, in which, as far as I can judge, it originally came before my own mind.

In the Dedication of this Volume to the Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford, I have acknowledged my great obligation to him for the instruction which I hope I have derived from his writings—an acknowledgment which, happily, I am so far from being singular in making, that I suppose every one who has studied them, might make the same statement. But it is right that I should say, that as I have not learned a lesson by rote, but, from the first, thought patiently and freely for myself, so the Public must not consider the Professor answerable for every opinion which I may have expressed. And it may be well also to add, that the general doctrine here set forth is

not hastily taken up on any man's authority; but was maintained by the writer, both in private and public, as many will bear witness, long before he had the happiness and advantage of being acquainted with the works, or characters, of the present leading Divines of the University of Oxford.

St. Peter's, Walworth, Surrey.

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I.

THE DOCTRINE.

FROM THE EPISTLE ¹.—"How, then, shall they call on HIM in Whom they have not believed?—and, How shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard?—and, How shall they hear without a preacher?—and, How shall they preach except they be SENT?"—ROMANS X. 14.

AT this season of preparation for the ADVENT, the Apostolical Ministry is one of the subjects especially brought before us by the CHURCH, as doubtless peculiarly calculated to fit our minds for the right reception and reverent contemplation of our SAVIOUR'S first and second Coming. It would be needless to enlarge on the suitability of the Epistle selected for this Introductory Festival, opening and leading the way, as it does, to those of the whole "glorious company of the

¹ The Feast of St. Andrew.

Apostles." We can scarcely read the passage now quoted, without recognizing at once much of its appropriateness. It contains a brief vindication both of the moral necessity and the Divine authority of the Christian Ministry ; and so plainly, that, to some extent, all must perceive it. But it may be highly profitable to us to draw out and examine with attention the subject, which St. Paul thus lays before us in epitome only ; concerning which we know that there is much diversity of thinking among professing Christians, and, consequently, great danger of wrong thinking.

It is too much the practice of modern theologians to refer to the New Testament, almost as if it were a book of aphorisms ; and so, when a quotation is made therefrom, it seems to be inquired, what meaning it will *bear* ; or what use can be *made* of it ; rather than, what meaning it *must* have had in such a connection ; or what use *must* have been intended, under such circumstances. And hence has resulted this fatal consequence, that the apostolic writings are commonly interpreted by modern opinions, instead of modern opinions being tested by the apostolic writings. There is but too painful evidence of this, in the manner in which some men set about "proving"

their peculiar system by the Scriptures; evidently assuming from the first that their system is *right*, and so (unconsciously, we trust,) sorting and arranging the "best texts" to establish it. Surely an attempt to treat any other ancient book as the Holy Scriptures are thus treated, would not be borne with. Suppose, for example, any disciple of the schools of the modern scepticism should attempt to show, from selected passages of some leading treatise of ancient philosophy, that his own opinions precisely coincided with those of the sage from whom he was quoting; it is evident that he would hereby deceive no one but himself. On a reference to the treatise in question, it would be at once apparent, that it was written by one who held opinions widely different from the modern. Now since, among Christians, there is an universal appeal to the Scriptures, would it not be a rational method of testing the opinions of any of the various classes among us, to inquire, whether it is likely that such writings *would* have proceeded from the pens of men holding such and such opinions? Might we not thus arrive at as sure a conclusion, notwithstanding all arguments from texts and passages, that some nominally Christian opinions now received, were not the opinions of the sacred writers—as that the opinions of Locke were not

the opinions of the ancient Epicureans, notwithstanding the coincidences that might be found? And if it should be seen that any class of opinions exactly harmonizes with the literal writings of the Apostles, so that we may imagine the men who held them to have naturally written what the Apostles wrote; then, should we not have a highly probable argument for the Scriptural character of those opinions? Such an argument will in some degree pervade these Lectures.

Few, perhaps, will fail to perceive some wide difference between that state of mind which is implied by our popular Christianity, and that which is implied by the Apostolic Epistles. The complete unworldliness, the quiet, elevated self-denial, the earnest humility, the obedience on the one hand and authority on the other, which are the evident characteristics of practical Christianity as it appears in the inspired records, are strikingly different from all which we see now in our popular religion; and may at times well suggest the fear that we may have lost much of that faith which the first Christians possessed. And in no particular is this difference more remarkably seen, than in the language held respecting the MINISTRY of the CHURCH; which from its undeniable importance deserves no light considera-

tion. Of course it may be said, that much of the difference of tone respecting the Ministry may be ascribed to the "cessation of apostolic authority strictly so called." But however this be, which we pass for the present, it is apparent to all, that there *is* a difference: and so, men attempt to "account for the fact," rather than deny it. To account, for example, for the "magnified importance" plainly attributed in Holy Scripture to the living voice of an APOSTOLIC MINISTRY, above and beyond, and often without reference to other means of Christian instruction. Not only the plea just mentioned, but other similar ones are urged, as the "change of circumstances," the "alteration in the times," and the like, to account for the fact. How dangerous all such arguments and evasions are, to those who seek a religion exactly, or as nearly as possible, such as the first Christians had, needs scarcely to be urged on any thoughtful mind. For after all these suppositions and reasonings, it will still remain very possible that THE MINISTRY first Divinely set up in the CHURCH, was *not* intended essentially to change with the changing circumstances of this world; very possible that this might have been given as one permanent if not paramount means of grace for mankind, notwithstanding the subsequent introduction of other means, however efficacious

and invaluable. And then, the actually existing ministry, its historical continuity, its unconcealed pretensions, are facts not to be lightly set aside when viewed in connection with this possibility only; even if it were nothing more. How much of Apostolical grace is lost from the ministry, it may be impossible to say; but so also it would be equally impossible to say how much is retained. Hence, it must ever remain the *safest* course for a Christian man to adhere to an Apostolically descended Ministry. Let us not pass too hastily from these thoughts; let us follow them out, into minuter detail; in order to enter into the state of mind apparently implied by language such as that in the passage, for instance, which constitutes our text.

Does it not here seem, by St. Paul's way of putting his questions, leaving them, as it were, to answer themselves in every Christian mind, that they could in his esteem admit of only one answer? That they must conduct people to the inevitable conclusion of the necessity of a LIVING MINISTRY? Modern Christianity would easily find *other* replies; and does so practically. But is there no danger in such a course? No danger in thus *assuming* the sufficiency of what may be termed literary methods of Christian instruction?

nevertheless it is certain, that very often it *is* assumed. "How shall they believe in HIM of whom they have not *heard?*" "By reading the Bible and judging for themselves," would be the reply of modern Christianity. "How shall they hear without a preacher?" asks the Apostle. And modern believers might truly reply, "We do not see the difficulty—Have we not our Bibles in our hands?" "How shall they preach except they be SENT?" is the inquiry of St. Paul. And, "surely every man who understands his Bible may teach it to another," might be the ready modern reply. To the Apostle's mind, on the contrary, such questions seemed to carry with them their own unavoidable answers, establishing beyond controversy the necessity of an authoritative publishing of the truth by living teachers, and those duly sent (*αποσταλωσι*): nor does the SPIRIT of inspiration (to whom every future change was known) here give any hint of the future change of this system of teaching.

But further: what St. Paul meant by being "sent," or "apostolically commissioned," as well as the high importance which he attached to it, may be gathered from the extreme anxiety with which, at the opening of his Epistles to the Churches, he repeats, and dwells on, the fact of

his own apostolical character; which is so conspicuous, that the want of such a preface has sometimes been urged as an argument against his authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews¹. “ Paul an APOSTLE of JESUS CHRIST;” “ Paul CALLED to be an Apostle, separated unto the Gospel of GOD;” “ Paul an APOSTLE not of men, neither by man,” but “ by the will of GOD.” Such are the beginnings of his Epistles. Nor was such an anxiety at all unnatural in him; because his apostolical character was not so regularly derived as that of others, and had been greatly disputed in some churches, and so needed constant vindication: of which the Apostle seemed to be well aware. But, on modern principles, this self-vindicating anxiety is quite unintelligible. It never could have been manifested by St. Paul, if he had only thought, “ that every man has a right to be a Christian teacher, whether he has a mission or not, provided he is persuaded of his own ability, and can persuade others of it too.” To one unacquainted with this notion, there certainly would seem to be some powerful difficulty (which others would not see) in this question, “ How shall they preach except they be

^f Not *justly* so; because in writing to his own people, there was not perhaps the same necessity for vindicating his apostolate.

“SENT?” And therefore in the next chapter to this which contains these questionings, St. Paul again glances at this topic, and says, “Inasmuch as I am the Apostle (the SENT one) of the Gentiles, I magnify mine OFFICE.” Now, as we have said, it is very easy to reply to all this, that St. Paul’s circumstances were different, and that that will account for the difference of his feelings and language. For even granting this, is it either consistent with a cautious reason, or a Christian humility, to assume in this way, that we are right in differing from St. Paul, provided we can “account for the difference?” Or, supposing that our altered times do account for the difference (as in some sense they do), does it follow that they justify it? Perhaps we may “account for” most of man’s transgressions against GOD’S law, but does that *justify* them? But let us keep to the case before us. How can we be so sure, that if in the apostolic days the common people had possessed Bibles, and were able to read them, and, in a word, were outwardly circumstanced in all respects as we are, then St. Paul’s principles, and St. Paul’s exhortations, would have been such as ours now are? Have we any right to say, without proof, that St. Paul assigned such an importance to the teaching of a living ministry, *solely* because

Bibles were not plentiful? Might there not have been other reasons? Consider: is it not very conceivable that there might have been that in Christianity which could only be perfectly conveyed by an institution such as the living ministry?—and which, therefore, without that ministry, would not be attained, even though men possessed every other means? Now, without saying that it is so, and not insisting on the probability of it (arising from the analogy¹ of God's past dealings with mankind, and from the very nature of our social condition), it is enough to affirm, that it is very *possible*, very conceivable, that an apostolical ministry might have been made by GOD the perpetual channel of a grace to man, which might be conveyed in no other way. And the possibility of this ought for ever to restrain us from the rash conclusion, that Christian blessings may be sufficiently attained by private reading of the Bible.—If any are inclined to such a conclusion, by the consideration that possibly the apostolic ministry had a miraculous blessing which no ministry had after the Apostles' age; so that language well suited to the first generation of the Christian ministers, may not be suitable now; it might be

¹ See Notes. No. I.

answer enough to point out, that such a supposition remains to be substantiated, and that it must be hazardous to take up with a theory which incurs the risk of realizing *on principle* only a defective Christianity. But more than this may be briefly added, viz. : That as miraculous power was no peculiarly apostolical prerogative (for all ranks of Christians had possessed it), so neither can the want of it argue a deficiency in apostolic grace and ministration ; That the Apostles associated with themselves Timotheus, Silvanus, Epaphroditus¹ and others, as possessing the same MINISTRY with themselves, though no miraculous gift ; and, That if the same ministry be not to continue for ever in the church, then it would follow that “ Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” has not been literally fulfilled ; That the words of Scripture which relate to the Church’s Ministry, must not be understood by us as they certainly were by the first Christians, and, consequently, the plain sense of the Bible is not our guide, as it was theirs so far as they possessed it. And so, finally, our Christianity may be proved at last to come short of the standard of Scripture, and be fatally different in some important points from that which was originally given to the world.

¹ Philippians ii. 22. 25.

Nothing which has now been said is intended to call in question the reality of those blessings which GOD may and sometimes does bestow apart from His appointed means, or by some only of those means apart from the rest. But enough has surely been said to admonish men against that easy and off-hand way of getting rid of those texts which imply high apostolic power, by saying, that such passages only suit the primitive days and the Apostles' own ministry. On the other hand, we would not pretend to decide how large an amount of favour may be vouchsafed to those who have not the blessings of a true priesthood. Cornelius, we know, was a just man, and largely acceptable unto GOD, before he saw St. Peter, or received Christian baptism. Some, again, of the earliest disciples had embraced the truth in some degree, before they had heard "whether there was any HOLY GHOST," or had been baptized in the name of JESUS. And when the Philippian Church was deprived of the ministry of St. Paul, they were still admonished to rely on GOD'S in-dwelling SPIRIT in the Church, and "much more in the Apostle's absence to work out *their own salvation.*" GOD may dispense with His own appointed means, and may supply the lack of them; but man cannot. But if it were right to compare, or contrast, one of GOD'S given means of grace with another, it

might perhaps appear that none of them are so essential as the Church's MINISTRY, whereby all the rest seem to have been instrumentally preserved. Much which we are too apt think exclusively essential to the existence of Christian truth and purity, had no being in the early Church. It is likely that all essential means of edification would be given to the first generation of believers; and, in fact, was not the most exalted Christian grace possessed in the Church previous to the Christian Scriptures? Whoever will reflect on these points, will at least be prepared seriously to consider, what in primitive days was understood by the ministerial mission to teach,—what the meaning of St. Paul was in such terms as he applied to the ministers of CHRIST? (as that they were the “sent” servants, “stewards of mysteries,” “ALLOWED of GOD and PUT IN TRUST with the Gospel,”) and whether that may not be the true Christian meaning still?—whether, notwithstanding the altered times, there may not be as much meaning now as there ever was in the question, “How shall men preach except they be SENT?”

HERE it may be rejoined, that there are many who acknowledge the necessity of a Ministry in the CHURCH, and who allow that it ought, in all main particulars, to resemble that of the primitive

Christians; nay, who notoriously assign a very high value to such a ministry, as a peculiar means of grace having a peculiar promise of blessing annexed to it, and yet do not acquiesce in the Catholic doctrine concerning it. And would it not be an unfairness to charge such with setting aside the apostolic ministry? or too little esteeming it? Doubtless, it might be. But yet this rather anomalous circumstance, that men who are generally supposed to be somewhat lax, at least, respecting the subject of an authoritative ministry, should also be often thought to give undue prominence to “the Sermon” of a minister, even beyond other means of grace; this, I say, only renders it the more important that we should understand clearly what men mean by a “ministry” in the Church,—what they consider its real powers and chief functions,—and what its special grace and blessing? For it can hardly be questioned, that many think that they believe in a Christian ministry, when they are only believing in a particular minister;—think that they are believing in a MINISTRY, when they are only believing in eloquence. Many make free use of words, when they would shrink from the ideas which they naturally convey; and ascribe a degree of blessing to a ministry, which in strictness of speech they would never think of seriously attributing to

any such cause. And it cannot serve the interests of truth to smooth over really different opinions, by generalized expressions, just "for the sake of peace." The truth is, there is the greatest possible vagueness of belief, or rather opinion, respecting the Christian Ministry, in our times and country especially. There is, perhaps very generally, an indistinct impression, that *something* is required to make a man "a minister of the Gospel;" but what it is, very few would be ready to say: and this may be well looked on as a sort of instinctive testimony of the human mind to the felt truth, "that it is not lawful for any man," on the mere suggestion of his own thoughts, to stand forth as a teacher of religion. Common sense seems thus to make the inquiry, "How shall they preach except they be SENT?"

It is felt universally, that a teacher of religion should have some credentials. The most illiterate, indeed, will often take the word of any man of outwardly respectable appearance, who can manage, with the mixture of a few Scripture phrases, to talk in an incomprehensible way, and look upon him directly as a "minister." The extent of this implicit faith among some classes of sectaries is almost incredible to those who have not personally witnessed it. But yet even these will clothe their ministers with spiritual powers;

and believe their ministrations to convey a grace, and to possess a primitive and apostolical value, such as those very "ministers," if pressed, would formally disown. Hence many persons of these sects are violently shocked, when we deny the validity of their sacraments as the sure channels of God's grace; little thinking that their own ministers do not *suppose* them to be so. And so also the multitude of sects which flourished in this country during the time of the Great Rebellion, owed much of their success to their unscrupulous assertions of a "divine mission;" persuading the people that theirs was the "discipline of CHRIST;" and alleging a "divine right" for every part of it. And yet, notwithstanding this feeling planted in our very nature, that a spiritual ministry must have a spiritual origin, it is astonishing to see the facility with which almost any professed teacher is received. Just as mere ignorance inclines the most illiterate, so the better classes are induced, by indolence or habit, to receive almost any man as a religious instructor. "How their minister *became* a minister?" is a question which seems hardly to have occurred to the majority of people. If a man has only ability enough to obtain a congregation and a chapel, and especially if he assumes the outward appearance and style of a clergyman, and is thought a

“respectable man,” nothing more is generally inquired. But can this satisfy any one who thinks seriously? The Bible describes the Christian Minister in a very solemn way, as the “Savour of life or death” to souls—as being an earthly vessel possessed of a “Heavenly TREASURE,” the weight whereof he was not sufficient to bear! and so, to the first Minister of the Church it was said, “What *thou* shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven;”—Whatever this mysterious language implies, are we to take a man to be all this on his own bare word? or on the ground of his personal talents or sincerity?—Or can the people’s support of any man endow him with these awful prerogatives of a Divine Ministry? Can a congregation, however numerous, give what they themselves possess not? Holy Scripture classes together CHRIST’S OWN MISSION from HIS FATHER; and the APOSTLES’ MISSION from CHRIST. Even the SON of GOD “glorified not Himself” to be made an High Priest. HE began not His ministry till He was divinely pointed out at His baptism, and from that time JESUS began to “preach and to teach.” Even He confessed, “As the FATHER hath SENT ME,” and, as “the FATHER hath given ME commandment,” even “so I do.” And HIS blessed Apostle said, “GOD was in CHRIST reconciling the world unto Himself, . . . and hath

COMMITTED unto US the ministry of reconciliation ;” and when the same Apostle was “ about to be offered,” and the “ time of his departure was at hand,” he said, “ This charge I COMMIT unto thee, son Timothy ;” and further, “ the same COMMIT thou to faithful men,” who shall TEACH others also. Indeed every Scripture precedent is against the notion so wholly inconsistent with the idea of a “ commission,” that a man may teach in the name of GOD, without GOD’S authority so to do. Surely the words of Scripture mean something. “ Pastors,” “ stewards of mysteries,” “ overseers,” “ ambassadors,”—those “ in CHRIST’S stead,” those “ speaking in the person of CHRIST,” those whom the Churches were commanded to “ obey” as “ watchers for souls,” and “ accountable.”—Those who were received as “ angels of GOD,” even “ as JESUS CHRIST ;” “ workers together with GOD,” “ angels of the Churches,” “ stars in CHRIST’S right hand !” Are these the descriptions of an earthly dignity where-with a man of ability may clothe himself? Do they mean less than they say?—or rather do they not powerfully point the question, “ How shall men preach except they be SENT ?”

But notwithstanding the vagueness of the popular creed, it is not to be denied, that those

who think attentively about religion and read their Bible with care, and yet embrace sectarian views, have some way of explaining all these, and similar expressions, so as to bring them, in some degree, into conformity with their particular views. Doubtless some sort of explanation would be *necessary* to give a measure of consistency to their systems. And into the examination of their manifold systems it would be impossible now to enter. Nor is it necessary; it is enough to point out the fundamental error, of having a system, and then "explaining" texts down to that system. And this perhaps may be sufficiently done by glancing chiefly at two classes of the most received theories, with a view of showing that they alike proceed on a common principle, and that (in consequence) instead of taking the words of Scripture as they plainly stand, and accepting them as the Church does, in their full natural meaning, they are obliged to "explain." Such, indeed, we have already said to be our running argument. "Would the sectarians, or would Catholics, have been more likely to employ naturally such and such words?" And more than this we can scarcely attempt on this occasion. Indeed a formal confutation of many such systems as we are now alluding to, would be almost impossible. There is something so indeterminate about them, that

there is no tangible point of attack. The bare denial of an Apostolically descended Ministry is, frequently, all that can be obtained from our opponents. And where we are not presented with this sort of vacuity of belief, we still meet with nothing more than some thin theory of a *possible* ministration, whereby a straining ingenuity attempts to harmonize its own opinions with the facts and statements of Scripture; as if we were set to inquire—what *may* be, or *might be* a system of religious teaching? and not rather, what was from the beginning?

One theory of a Christian ministry maintained, with more or less of distinctness, by very many, is, that none are rightly “sent,” or commissioned to teach CHRIST’S religion, unless they have what is termed an “inward call.” Now, if they mean by this, that every minister of CHRIST ought to be inwardly impressed with the importance of his calling, no one will question it: but they must mean more than this, or their meaning amounts to nothing. Their idea seems to be, that no man has a right to become a “minister,” who has not some overpowering personal conviction of his spiritual destination to the ministerial office, and that this is a sufficient evidence of a true “call” to the office; and in conformity with

this notion they explain every text. Now if any one imagines that he has such evidence of a call within him, it is useless to reason with him. He is clearly beyond that. If he can so persuade himself, he may also persuade himself that all Scripture is on his side; or any thing else. Few, indeed, will be disposed to envy the venturous self-confidence of one who could thus stand forth (with eternity before him) and on his own sole authority profess, "I am an ambassador for CHRIST!"—"I am a 'savour of eternal life and death!'" Not to dwell, too, on the opening thus given to fanaticism of every kind, it is certain also that a man's personal conviction can be no evidence to others; and yet others are interested in the matter. How far his apparent religious success may be so, is another question, which had better be separately examined, and which we shall hereafter consider. But, it is plain, as we have said, and again insist, that a man's personal conviction alone is no sufficient proof for *others* that he is "sent" to preach Christianity. The Apostolic Epistles, every where, imply as St. Paul does in his question to the Roman Church, that the being "sent" was a matter which other men could judge of. It is certain, too, that the Apostles had something *more* at least than an "inward call." They were, according to the Scriptures,

outwardly called, from the very first, by CHRIST Himself. And St. Paul, the only one who was not so, was outwardly called, afterwards, by an express miracle. So that the Bible, and Apostolic example, are alike against the notion of the sufficiency of an inward call. And here it may be collaterally remarked, that, least of all men, can the members of our Church admit this, at the best inadequate, doctrine; for the 23rd Article is emphatically against it. It reads thus:—"It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and SENT to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the LORD'S vineyard." Above all, therefore, the man who holds this doctrine of our Church will see a force which the advocates of the inward call cannot understand in St. Paul's question, "How shall men preach except they be SENT?"

But another notion concerning the Ministry, practically entertained to a very wide extent is, That the Government of a country has the

prerogative of making Ministers of Religion. That this revolting opinion could possibly prevail in a Christian land, is, perhaps, one of the most fearful proofs which could be brought of Pagan ignorance, among nominal believers. And yet, under various modifications, it prevails to an extent scarcely credible. What but this is implied in the expression which we often hear even educated people make use of, "that the State makes Bishops?" What but this is implied in our quiet acquiescence in the notion, that an act of the State may abolish some of our bishopricks? What but this is the ordinary practical interpretation of the phrase, "the Church as by law established?" which sometimes is even cast at us as an acknowledgment that our Church's origin is an Act of Parliament. Is it not true, that many have no other idea of a clergyman, than that he may be better educated, perhaps, than some other teachers, and so is "patronized by the State?" And, is this the idea of a minister of CHRIST which the Bible would give? Is it a doctrine of the first Christians, that men, simply because they are governors, and happen to have civil power, may clothe their fellow men with the awful prerogatives of a Spiritual Mission? Is it a doctrine of the Church of England—when our Article expressly denies to kings all spiritual

authority—and when Queen Elizabeth allowed the oath of supremacy to be taken, with an accompanying declaration to that effect?—It is easy, of course, to construct a theoretical argument to prove, “That the governor of a State is bound to provide religious instruction for the people,”—but certainly such an argument will not prove that the civil governor can give to any man a spiritual AUTHORITY. It can only prove, that it is his duty to seek for a rightly authorized and commissioned instructor, and give him the *additional* worldly advantage of a legal sanction and defence. It may be, that governors should look for and *find* a religious teacher for the people—but they cannot *make* one. Governors must be instructed and saved by the same heavenly means as the people; and neither can rightfully intermeddle with the administration of Divine things. On the leprous forehead of King Uzziah we may read the presumption of those who will so invade the sacred office. (2 Chron. xxvi. 19.) But it would be impossible to draw out more minutely in this place¹ the arguments either for or against the Erastian theory; and we are chiefly concerned to show that it is wholly inconsistent with Scriptural and Pri-

¹ They who would wish to investigate this subject further, may find it fully treated in Leslie’s “Case of the Regale and Pontificate.”

mitive doctrine, which taught, that men should “give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s; but unto GOD alone the things which are GOD’s.” The argument which we would, again and again urge, is, Whether the notion of the State commissioning the religious instructor is in harmony with the language of the New Testament? Does not the Christian mind at once revolt from the thought, That a ruler of this world can commission any as ambassadors of the world’s SAVIOUR? That the government of any country can by their state-licence empower a man to “bless in the name of the LORD?”—to be a “steward” of Holy mysteries?—to absolve penitents,—and “deliver to Satan” the ungodly? Such was the Minister of CHRIST according to Primitive belief and Scriptural statement; acting “in the person of CHRIST,” and marking with holy indignation any who refused to “follow” in his steps. He “fed the flock of GOD,” took “the oversight of them,” and “stirred up the gift that was within him” by the laying on of hands. These are the very words of Scripture, and they, surely, never would have been thought of, never could have been naturally used by the inspired writers, if they had entertained the thought, that the State could make a man a Christian Minister.

And such a thought certainly was not enter-

tained by the Christians of the first 300 years, any more than by the Apostles; who were not even countenanced by governors, but in things spiritual “resisted unto blood,” and were charged with “turning the world upside down,” rather than submit to men in aught that pertained unto GOD. Even as late as the fourth century, the great president of the Nicene Council thus declared to the Emperor the Christian doctrine¹: “GOD has put dominion into your hands. To us He hath entrusted the government of the Church; and as a traitor to you is a rebel to the GOD who ordained you, so be afraid on your part, lest usurping ecclesiastical power you become guilty of a great sin.” And again: “Meddle not with Church matters; far from advising us about them, rather seek instruction from us.” “Remember that you are a man.” “Fear the day of Judgment.” And nothing can be plainer than the language addressed by St. Hilary to the Arian bishops. “O ye bishops, I pray you, what suffrages did the Apostles make use of? Did *they* receive their dignity from the palace²?” And, after all, this is the unanswerable argument. St. Paul was not received as an Apostle, *because* he was allowed to preach to “Cæsar’s household.” St. Luke was

¹ See Newman’s History of the Arians, p. 347.

² Quoted by Leslie, from Bp. Burnet, p. 30.

not admitted as a Minister simply because he was an educated man. We do not find the enquiry in Scripture or antiquity, How shall men preach except they be “respectable?” or, how shall they preach except they be favoured by the State? or, how shall they preach except they have literary distinctions? Necessary and useful as all these qualifications may be, the distinctive question concerning the Ministry is, “How shall men preach except they be SENT?”

Now we before observed, that the popular notions, such as these just considered, concerning the Christian Ministry, seem, with all their variations, to be the result of a common principle. The principle, that is, of reducing Christianity to a bare code, or system, of intelligible precepts or dogmas. And the advocates of these various notions are obliged, in some way, to lay out of consideration whatever they meet with, in Scripture or elsewhere, which is inconsistent with this principle. The further developement of these remarks may serve more clearly to elicit, and by contrast elucidate the Catholic doctrine of the Ministry.

The advocates, for example, of the “inward call,” seem generally to regard CHRIST’S religion

as a code of doctrines ; while the maintainers of a government call, i. e. the Erastians, regard it chiefly as a code of morals. They both “simplify ;” they both systematize ; and their systems, as such, proceed on very similar grounds. The former system would naturally consider all things subsidiary to what is called “the application” of the revealed doctrines to individuals. Whatever agency seems calculated most powerfully to bring home the doctrine to the mind of a man, that is the most desirable ; and with a reference to this, and *as so viewed*, every thing in Scripture is forthwith explained. Thus: Are Christians commanded in Scripture to be ONE ? This system interprets it to mean, that they must have one general “doctrine.” Are we said to be united to CHRIST as “members” to a body ? This system calls it a “metaphor,” designed only to inculcate charity and kindness. Are we said to be saved by the “washing of water ?” This system tells us to understand it “spiritually :” for ‘that the water only represents the SPIRIT.’ In a word, it simply regards Christianity as a divine mental philosophy ; and only values the visible Church as a useful means, in such proportion as it effectually “applies” this to individuals. Of course there are countless varieties of this species of religion, yet they agree in this, that they all regard it as an

abstract code of principle, and whatever they find in the Bible beyond this, they bend to their system in one way or another. Calvinists, Semi-calvinists, Arminians, and Pelagians, all seem to believe in a kind of essence of Christianity, the existence of which in an individual is to be tested by his possession of a sort of religious sense, to which religious sense they indiscriminately apply every expression of Scripture concerning the various states of the true Christian. Accordingly the possessor of this sense is “regenerated,” “elect,” “enlightened,” “renewed,” “born again”—and whatever else they can “accommodate” in any verse of the Bible. A new and intangible meaning is found for every term; every thing must be sublimely doctrinal. The very precepts of Holiness are looked on as “consequences,” which need not, therefore, be too formally insisted on. The Sacraments of CHRIST are “elevated,” or extenuated, into “shadows,” and “signs.” The Church itself is evaporated into an “invisible” essence!

The other system, that of the Moralist, is rather more difficult thus to maintain and adapt to Scripture. Considering Christianity as a sort of republication of the law of natural morality, with, perhaps, the announcement of the necessity of repentance, and the assurance of consequent for-

givenness with the DEITY ; all beyond this is regarded as mere enthusiasm. The defenders of this system would allow the existence of a Ministry to be exceedingly "useful," and so come to think it the duty of the State to support it. These, like the former class, would maintain a visible Church, because it is "useful;" and so they themselves will go to Church, they tell us, "for example's sake." These, if they are a little educated, soon become Socinians¹, and find it necessary to attribute something much less than inspiration to the Bible, and so avoid its plain testimony against their system; and then their course is a very plain one. Those of the party who are more ignorant, are generally found lulled in a complete religious torpor, from which it seems almost impossible to wake them; for if disturbed they only shut their eyes the closer, and more inflexibly, as if it were the duty of "plain Christians," and "sound old Churchmen," to understand nothing.

Now in contrast to these and all other simplifiers of the Catholic truth, we neither would attempt on the one hand, to reduce the Bible to a code of

¹ It has been well remarked, that the consequence of allowing it to be said "that we are a Parliamentary Church," has been, that the higher ranks among us are verging towards

spiritual principles, nor on the other to reject spirituality altogether as extravagance. Consequently we have no need to get rid of any part of Scriptural truth, either by "explanations" or "criticisms." We see that Scripture does declare spiritual doctrines, and that it does enforce practical morals. But we see much more than this in the Bible; for we take it all literally, and plainly. We think that the Scripturally recorded means, for applying the grace of CHRIST'S religion are just as divine, and therefore, for aught we know, just as essential, as either the doctrines or precepts of that religion. Neither those doctrines nor precepts may be rightly received, except in connexion with, and as parts of, the WHOLE Divine Revelation; and of this the means of heavenly grace included in the Church, are an undoubted portion. Indeed what may be called the DOCTRINE of the CHURCH, may be seen in a manner to comprehend every other, so that even the truth of the Ministerial Succession is but a part of that DOCTRINE.

It is very easy to mystify a plain subject, and Deism, and the lower to Fanaticism. The former, not believing that there can be much Divine in a religion which they can shape and modify as they please in the Senate. And the other, seeing nothing very "scriptural," or heavenly, in a "State-made" Creed.

to represent that the word CHURCH is of doubtful meaning; but let any reader of the Bible answer this question:—When St. Paul wrote a letter to “the CHURCH of Philippi,” was there any difficulty in deciding whom he meant to address? It is plain that there existed in that city a number of families BAPTIZED in the name of CHRIST; and that number was ruled over by certain spiritual officers; and, as a whole, was called THE CHURCH. Wherever, then, we find a similar body of men, we say, there is a Church. Now, we believe that such bodies of men, so organized, and constituting, in the aggregate, the Church Universal, or Catholic, must exist to the end of the world; because, at the very time when CHRIST promised to set up such an institution, He promised to it a perpetuity. “I will build My CHURCH;” and the “gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” All this we believe simply as it stands, putting no invisible meanings upon it. Wherever, indeed, we meet with a spiritual truth, we receive it; but we desire not to make or imagine one where it exists not, just to carry out an hypothesis of our own.

We know that the spiritual rulers of the CHURCH were made so at first by CHRIST personally, and that all the members of the CHURCH were made so in one way, namely, by Baptism.

(Gal. iii. 27.) We think that to the CHURCH alone the peculiar promises of the Gospel were made. (2 Peter i. 4.) We believe that there was an awful power lodged in the CHURCH, and exercised from the beginning, through her Rulers, a power which, for example, could exclude unworthy members from Communion, and that those so excluded were cut off from the CHURCH'S peculiar blessing. (Matt. xviii. 18.) We think that how much soever Excommunication might now be called a "form," it was no mere form in the Apostles' days. (1 Cor. v. 5; Gal. v. 12; 1 Tim. i. 20. and v. 20.) We look with reverence therefore on the powers of the CHURCH, in her Ministers. We dare not hastily pronounce any thing to be "a mere matter of discipline" or "only a form," because we feel that we are ignorant of the mysterious ways of GOD: and none can determine the limit which separates Divine Doctrine and Discipline. In fine, we look upon the CHURCH herself as One Eternal SACRAMENT: the One great outward and visible Institute, set up by CHRIST, conveying to its members His invisible grace, through many consecrated channels.

The permanent continuance of this One CHURCH on earth we see to have been, in point of fact, connected, from the beginning, with One perma-

manent Ministry or Priesthood, with which, at the first, CHRIST the great High Priest promised to be virtually present “to the end of the world.” So that, as it was promised that the CHURCH should never be prevailed against; so also that Ministry which was essential to it, should never cease. To the CHURCH we know the New Testament was addressed: and by the CHURCH (with all other means of grace) it was preserved. By the CHURCH’S instrumentality we, individually, are brought to that Font where the “stewards of GOD’S mysteries” received us to the mystic body of the faithful. By the CHURCH we really are taught in the truth; for notwithstanding every boast of independent thinking, the CHURCH is practically to us, what it was to the first Christians, “the pillar and ground of truth.” (1 Tim. iii. 15.) From the CHURCH’S voice we learn even the lessons of Holy Scripture. And not only the transmitted Wisdom, but the transmitted Grace of Christ is thus ours; for the CHURCH is the “fulness of Him that filleth all in all!” (Eph. i. 23.)—On our head the CHURCH directs that holy hands be laid. In the CHURCH we obtain that grace, whereby we go on “from strength to strength:” and in our partaking of the mysterious Sacrifice which “showeth forth the LORD’S death,” glory is given “unto GOD in the

CHURCH, by CHRIST JESUS, throughout all ages." Nay we doubt not, that even "unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places there is made known by the CHURCH the manifold wisdom of GOD!"

This is the Catholic faith. We trust in GOD—we rely on His word, and His appointments; as being anxious to recognise His presence among us, as really and truly as the Holy Apostles did, when their LORD stood visibly before them and said, "Lo! I AM WITH YOU always!" And it may safely be left to any man to judge, how far these thoughts and feelings are in harmony with the literal word of GOD. Every one may see that *we* have nothing there to explain away—nothing to "account for." It is such as we might have written ourselves, so far as the sentiments are concerned, to the full extent that those sentiments may be apprehended. How simple and natural to us sounds the injunction, "Obey them that have the Rule over you, for they watch for your souls!" and how awkward, to say the least, when spoken of self-sent teachers, or those whom the people have commissioned and "called."—Believing that the CHURCH is the perpetual depositary of those awful gifts, which CHRIST gave to men when He "ascended up on high," know-

ing that He gave some Apostles, “some prophets, some pastors, and teachers,” for the perfecting of the saints, “till we all come in the Unity of the faith, . . . unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST”—Not doubting that these, CHRIST’S gifts, have remained and ever shall remain in His CHURCH; with what thoughts must we regard the CHURCH’S Ministry! How can *we* feel the thrilling solemnity of St. Paul’s exclamation, after he had absolved the Corinthian penitent, “SUCH TRUST have we through CHRIST to GOD-ward!”—“SUCH TRUST!”—words may not describe it—“SUCH TRUST!”—“not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of GOD, WHO also hath MADE US Ministers of the New Testament!” What depth of meaning to us is there in such language as, “Feed the flock of GOD over whom the HOLY GHOST HATH MADE you overseers!” We feel that we are using it in the Apostle’s divine sense—yes, the very same solemn sense! All systematizers are obliged to put some lower diluted meaning upon it! And not on this alone, but on every similar text of the Sacred Word! Which of them can say, in the same sense as the Apostles did, of the Ministers of CHRIST, that they are “Workers together with GOD?”—Let any man revolve in his mind all those words so copiously quoted already, concerning the

unearthly responsibilities of those who have to “save themselves, and them that hear them.” Let a man deeply think of his SAVIOUR’S words, “I give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” “He that heareth you heareth Me,” and he will feel it strange mockery, to apply such language to a minister self-authorized, or commissioned by civil governors; and he will come to feel, as the believers in an Apostolic Ministry feel, the power of the question; “How shall men preach except they be SENT?”

Having now thus far explained the nature of the Catholic Doctrine of the Ministry; not attempting to prove it by theoretical arguments, but simply to contrast it with other doctrines, and compare it with Scripture; it remains for us, next to consider the means whereby this Ministry hath been continued in the Church; and for this purpose we must state the Doctrine of the SUCCESSION. The Evidences of the doctrine, and the Objections urged against it, we must reserve to the following lectures.

It is affirmed, that before the Apostles quitted the field of their earthly labours, they appointed “Successors;” and “laying their hands” on them, transmitted all the Apostolical power which they

had received from CHRIST. It is not supposed that the gift of Apostolical Ordination contained necessarily any such grace, as is ordinarily understood by the term miraculous; though many who were ordained at first, might of course have possessed likewise such miraculous gifts, as were very common to all classes of believers in the early Church. It is also on record, that the ordained Successors of the Apostles, before *they* also died, bequeathed their power and authority to others, by the same ceremony of “laying on of hands.” And it is not denied by any, that the same practice has universally prevailed from that time to the present. These Apostolical Successors throughout the whole Church, were deemed the centres of Unity, and sources of Sacramental grace to their respective communities, dioceses, or Churches. They were looked upon as Chief Embassadors of CHRIST—Vicegerents of the SAVIOUR of mankind—all, in a word, which St. Peter and St. Paul claimed to be:—Divinely “SENT.” (1 Tim. i. 12. ii. 7.) They were at first called by various names,—Apostles, Superintendents, Angels, and Bishops; but eventually this latter designation prevailed. From these Bishops every other officer of the Church derived his power, and “without the Bishop,” to use the words of St. Ignatius, the contemporary of the Apostles, it was not lawful to do

any thing in the Church. Finally, for more than a thousand years there was no Church in all the world which was not so governed by Apostolically descended Bishops.

Such is an outline of the Doctrine of the Succession. A minuter consideration of its details will necessarily follow on, when we investigate the EVIDENCE, in our next lecture. The solemn consequences of the Doctrine itself, are such as may well dispose us to approach the examination with all seriousness of soul. For on the one hand, if we reject the Succession, it follows, that we have not left on earth any real Ministry of CHRIST; while if we admit it, we admit it with all its exclusive claims. Hard things may be said of the choice of such a subject, and the revival of such an inquiry, but the overwhelming importance of it will be a sufficient vindication to every reflecting mind seeking for truth. The time is come when questions like these may not be suffered to remain undecided. When Romanism has advanced so rapidly among us, making boast of its exclusive Apostolic claims, dare we be silent? If we will care not to show our people our Divine claims on their spiritual allegiance, can we wonder that they revolt to Rome? Might we not expect the very "stones to cry out against us?" In truth,

in very truth, we have been silent too long! And the meagre Christianity now prevalent on all hands, gives fatal evidence against us. Christians seem to have forgotten that they are already the members of an Eternal community!—Well may we ask, Are these the elect of GOD?—His chosen heritage?—with the unseen wall of fire around them, and an uncared-for glory in the midst? Yes, Christians seem almost wholly to have forgotten their endowment of manifold gifts—almost forgotten the “taste of the good word of GOD, and the Powers of the world to come,” (Heb. vi. 4.) so that it may appear well nigh impossible to “renew them again to repentance!” But shall the Churches venture thus to await, without an effort, the Second Coming of the LORD?—GOD forbid! “Whoso hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches”—“REMEMBER from whence thou art fallen! and repent! and do the FIRST works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou REPENT!”

II.

THE EVIDENCE.

FROM THE GOSPEL¹.—"It is written, My house shall be called the house of Prayer."—Matt. xxi. 13.

THESE words may serve to suggest some profitable reflections, preparatory to our entering on the subject of the present lecture. They are the words of an inspired prophecy, applied directly by our blessed LORD Himself to the then existing temple of the Jews. If we read them as they stand in the Old Testament, among other glorious predictions concerning the sanctuary of the LORD GOD of Israel, we are naturally inclined to expect some more illustrious fulfilment of them, than seems to have been ever vouchsafed to the "house of Prayer" at Jerusalem. The words of Isaiah (and the evangelist St. Mark has more exactly quoted them) are, "My house shall be called a house of Prayer, *for all people*;" a prophecy apparently equivalent, or nearly so, in magnitude to that of holy David, "*all nations* whom Thou hast

¹ The first week in Advent.

made shall COME and worship before Thee, O LORD, and shall glorify Thy name !” And it is very evident that this was never realized in the fullest extent, with respect to the Jewish Temple. Must we say then that the prophecy did not refer at all to the literal temple in Judea? None, perhaps, would venture so to affirm, seeing that our LORD Himself refers it to that temple. Thus much however we are bound to conclude, that this example shows us, how little we are able to decide beforehand what amount, or kind of fulfilment, a Divine prediction may have. And the fact, that our LORD spoke of the temple, such it was then, as GOD’S house, may serve also to check any over-hasty accusations of total apostasy, in consequence of extreme degeneracy among His people. It may be useful here to premise this, because it is not unusual to prejudice all enquiry, concerning the Catholic doctrine of the Ministry of the Christian Temple, by a precipitate and comprehensive assertion of its inconsistency with the spirituality and dignity of the Divine designs; an assertion generally supported by unmeasured charges of a corruption fatally destructive of the Divine sanction, of the Sacred character of any institute. Granting that the present state of the Apostolically descended Ministry in the Church Universal, is very far from what *we* should have

anticipated, from some of the statements of Scripture, it would not follow, it seems, that those statements are frustrated, but only that we had misinterpreted them. It would not follow, that the Ministry is not truly CHRIST's, but only that it needs HIS purifying. Our LORD came to His temple of old, of which such "glorious things" had been spoken, and He found it a "den of thieves," but still claimed it as His own, in the glowing words of the prophecy, "MY house shall be called the house of Prayer." It was not the glorious pile that Solomon had reared—it was not that which the returned children of the captivity had built; and its Priesthood stood not forth conspicuous for holiness. The beautiful courts of that temple had been restored and rebuilt by the crime-stained Herod; and they had been horribly polluted by violence and outrage. The sanguinary story of the "forty and six years" when that structure was building, is truly a lesson full of melancholy warning! and when at last CHRIST came to the holy mount, He found there a temple, well nigh built in blood and served by murderers; and yet He began to "purge it," and said of it, MY HOUSE! "MY HOUSE shall be called the house of Prayer!"

But do we say this to justify aught in the present

condition of the Church Catholic ? GOD forbid ! for though we trust it is not so deeply fallen as was the Jewish Church, “ our enemies themselves being judges,” yet we would not hide from ourselves our real state. But we bring forward these words of our LORD, and the reflections that have thus arisen out of them, in order to induce men to look calmly and fairly at the Evidence for our Christian Ministry, not hastily prejudging the question, in consequence of apparent moral and spiritual difficulties, (of which they may be making a wrong estimate and use,) but simply postponing, for a while, the objections which may be raised, and separately and honestly looking at the proof and certainty of the FACT of APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION. Should it be asked, Why we attach such importance to an institution, which, even if real, seems to have accomplished so little ? we reply, That we pretend not to be able to estimate the workings or the results of GOD’s plans. It is enough for us that they *are* GOD’s. And all we desire is, to ascertain the fact. But we have something further, on which our faith may repose. There are prophecies concerning GOD’s Church, (and perhaps our text is one,) which seem as yet to have had but little fulfilment. Haply that is to be done to the Church at the second Advent, which the purging of the temple, at the first Advent, only prefigured.

It appears but little likely that that brief significative act of CHRIST, from which nothing seemed to follow, was the whole fulfilment of the illustrious prophecy of Malachi concerning the LORD's "Coming suddenly to His Temple" to purify it. It requires no proof that *we* need such purifying. Is the main impression now formed of the Christian temple—that it is a "house of Prayer?" It is written, "From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, My name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered in My name, and a pure Offering¹." Hath this been yet accomplished? That which is written shall surely come to pass:—and on this our faith relies. And though there be no signs of a present fulfilment—though we may be told that "thieves and robbers" have made lawless entrance, and that very little betokens a Divine presence—a consecrated Priesthood or a "pure Offering" among us, our faith is unmoved. A cleansing must come:—for "it is written, MY house SHALL BE called the house of PRAYER."

In our last Lecture we attempted to show, that not a regularly Succeeding Ministry, but rather a self-commissioned one, is the really in-

¹ This prophecy seems taken by the ancient Fathers to refer to the Holy Eucharist.

credible thing ; and we endeavoured to give an outline of the Catholic doctrine of the Succession. In proceeding now to consider the Evidence of that Succession, we shall not dwell on those traces of the doctrine and the fact which we think are to be found in the New Testament : for several reasons. In the first place, this has been so often and so fully done¹, that it would be a superfluous labour. And then there is a felt unsatisfactoriness in all such arguments. Scripture was not written critically, and its terms were not precisely fixed ; so that several of the sects may and do build up plausible theories from passages of Scripture. And again, what we have already shown, amounts perhaps to all that is of any real value in any such arguments : viz. that the Catholic doctrine is not only in perfect *harmony* with every part of Scripture, but admits of a full and literal interpretation of all its strongest and most solemn language on this subject, in a manner which no sectarian doctrine can pretend to. So far as Scripture then is concerned, we feel no difficulty ; and we now attempt no argument. Our object is a very distinct one. Any man who reads the New Testament, may see that it contains a “ doctrine of

¹ It may be sufficient perhaps to refer to “ Hey’s Threefold Ministry,” as a synopsis of the Scriptural view of the subject.

laying on of hands." (Acts xiii. 3, 4; 1 Tim. v. 22; Heb. vi. 2.) Some may even perceive that the appointed and usual means of transmitting Ministerial authority, was this "Laying on of hands," and that none had power to use this means save the Apostles and those whom they authorized. (1 Tim. v. 22; 2 Tim. i. 6; Tit. i. 5.) Many a man may go so far as to admit the fact, that no Ministry was received in the Christian Church for a thousand years, and more¹, except that which was commissioned through the Apostles and their reputed Successors, the Bishops. And yet any such may still feel difficulty in the question—something almost amounting to a deficiency, at least, of clear Evidence. He may fairly be harassed by doubts such as these: "How am I to know after all, that all these bishops from age to age were truly ordained by a true Apostolic predecessor? Is it not both possible, and probable, that in some places, for example, a powerful man might have usurped authority in a Church, and made himself a Bishop?—Or a learned man, in 'dark times,' have imposed on the ignorant? And if so, would not all his Ministerial acts be worthless? And might not one such break in the chain, at some early period, have invalidated all subsequent Ordinations? Are there then any posi-

¹ See Bishop Hall's *Episcopacy by Divine right*.

tive proofs that such has not been the case? Where are the documents? What is the EVIDENCE of the facts, on which an intelligent man may rely¹?" All which questions are perfectly fair, and deserve to be honestly entertained. And to these (rather as connected with the fact than the doctrine) we address ourselves.

Perhaps, indeed, there is a brief answer to them all, which may at once satisfy many, better than a more tedious proof: namely, that if the "doctrine of laying on of hands," and the transmitted Ministry, be received as contained in Scripture, and taught ever by the Church, so the very same Holy Volume contains also the promise that CHRIST would be with His Ministers to the end of time; and He would therefore of course preserve to them all that was in the least degree essential. The faithfulness of CHRIST Himself would thus be a mighty proof to the humblest Christian, that all that Scripture inculcated as necessary to the Ministry, would truly be preserved in the Christian Church, as much as it formerly was in the Jewish. And he might also have this additional proof of the fact, that no one (not even infidels) would attempt to

¹ See Notes, No. II.

disprove it. But we will now endeavour to go a little more narrowly into the question, because it is frequently a stumbling block to many.

Let a man begin by analysing his own thoughts, and satisfy himself—first of all, what *kind* and *amount* of evidence he requires of the fact, that every Bishop of an Apostolic line was duly ordained by the “laying on of hands?” Does he expect to see the very documents written at the time, —and the seal and sign manual of those who were present?—or, would that suffice? Perhaps many may be disposed to think that such evidence must be satisfactory to the most incredulous. But pause, and consider: how should we know for certain that each separate document was quite authentic? How could we be quite sure that none were forged by some crafty monk during those mysterious times, which some people, (as if excusing their own want of light on the matter,) speak of as “dark ages?” Or, suppose any one, or two, or three of the documents were destroyed by all-corroding time? or had become illegible? What then? Surely such evidence would be thought very unsafe to rely on. Most persons would look with great suspicion on such an array of unknown manuscripts, and look about for something more satisfactory and possible. And

perhaps, then, it might not be amiss to inquire what kind, or amount of evidence it would be reasonable to look for ?

Will it not be reckoned enough, if it should appear, that we have as good evidence of the Succession of the Ministry from the first, as we have of the reality of the institution of the Sacraments ? or of the authenticity of Holy Scripture ? This methinks will be enough at least for Christian men in general, though it may not be satisfactory to every disputer ; and if we will attentively look into it we may certainly find the evidence to be quite as strong as this. The very same objections might be brought against the Apostolic Scriptures, the Apostolic Sacraments, and the Apostolic Ministry. We have the same kind of moral certainty of them all : and perhaps it might even be argued, that the highest degree of such certainty, if a difference could be admitted, pertains to the latter.—Thus much, at least, must be apparent on a very little reflection, that the kind and amount of evidence which some persons expect to have given them, of the Apostolic Succession, is impossible in the very nature of things, and exactly similar to the evidence which uneducated people, when they first begin to inquire, expect to find for the authenticity of the Bible, and

which infidels craftily demand for all Revelation, well knowing that it cannot, in the nature of things, be had. For, in the first place, we can none of us have the same kind of certainty concerning any fact transacted in our absence, as of what is done in our presence; much less of any thing which happened in a distant place, a foreign country, or before we were born. And still less if it be removed farther back; as before our fathers or great-grandfathers were born. Whoever, therefore, undertakes to believe no farther than he personally sees and knows, must suspend his faith in all history, and even in the daily conversations and transactions of those around him. And if any man is in this humour, we will not argue with him about it. It is plain that these notions of strict personal evidence for every thing must be abated, if we would exercise our common sense.

Let us take the case of a man who begins to examine the claims of the Bible to be received as the Word of God. Suppose him to be not very learned; he is able at least to see that *his* Bible is like other people's: and they, many of them being educated persons, believe it to be God's Word. This is something. And then it is the Authorized Version, sanctioned by the Church

and the State. And this is something more. And he sees that even those who abuse the Church, are either very bad men, or if they are sincere, well-meaning sort of people, and set up a new Religion for themselves, they are obliged, after all, to make use of the Church's Bible, and generally the Church's own Translation. He therefore has even so far tolerable ground for thinking that the Book which he has received as the Word of GOD is truly such.

Now we do not in the least question that all this, taken in connexion with the Internal excellence of The Volume, is very good evidence for the generality to rely on. It is just as good as, or perhaps better than, they can get for any fact of history, or common knowledge, or daily life. It is not demonstration—but it is sufficient, probable evidence—such as men take and act upon in every other matter, without thinking it a hardship, or unsafe. And we affirm that this is just the kind and amount of evidence which any man in this country may have either for the Apostolic Sacraments, or the Apostolic Ministry of the Church. He knows that his Church is the Church of his forefathers; and that they were baptized in it by her Ministers, before meeting-houses were thought of; that the learned and the good have abounded in it,

as all allow ; and that even those who depart from it, generally retain some similar outward forms both of Sacraments and Ministry, though (consciously and candidly) they own them to be then without any necessary grace in them. So that he regards his Church as a FACT borne witness to on all hands ; a sure and stable REALITY. Over and above all which, there is an Internal evidence also of Catholic Truth, which the humble and obedient surely possess at length. (John vii. 17.) For the Catholic Church teaches that the Baptismal grace of Regeneration, if watered by prayer and holy teaching, will at length expand into a certainty of persuasion of Her sacred institutes, (Prov. iv. 18 ; 2 Tim. i. 12.) which heresy will labour vainly to destroy. A blessed feeling, akin to the indestructible reverence of a child for its Mother, from whose lips the first words of prayer were learned, and the first peaceful hopes of heaven.

But, going beyond this case, take that of a man who can enter with sufficient care into the literary evidences of the truth of the Bible. If skilled in its languages, he will go at once to the printed editions of the originals. Then he must inquire, from what manuscripts the received text was printed ? And he will find it stated, that that of the New Testament, for instance, is one of about

the year eleven or twelve hundred. And for that fact he has to rely on the critical skill of certain scholars and editors, some of whom saw the manuscript, and thought it to be of that age. But next comes the question: where are the ORIGINAL manuscripts? And it then appears that they are *lost*. Then where are the copies first taken? or even *soon* taken, from the manuscripts? and it seems that these are *lost* too. How then is he to prove that the manuscript from which our New Testament is translated is a faithful copy of what was written nearly eighteen hundred years before, and so unfortunately lost? He has thereupon a laborious task before him. He must trace, for instance, the various quotations in the writings of the Fathers of the Church; and then compare them with some early translations. In connexion with which, he might observe the reverence with which Holy Scripture is always treated in the primitive writings; and that the exact names of all the Sacred Treatises are preserved alike, in various places. And by pursuing these and kindred methods, he will at length arrive at a strong probable conclusion as to the genuineness and authenticity of the Holy Volume: a conclusion continually accumulating in power and becoming at last morally irresistible, and practically equivalent to a demonstration. He sees, in fact, that

there are certain phenomena which can be explained by one hypothesis, and one only, and that therefore that one must be admitted. The actual state of Christian literature can only be explained on the supposition of the existence of some such Divine treatises as our New Testament at the close of the first century.

Now all this examination of evidence, satisfactory as it is in the result, is very far from being that easy and off-hand way of "proving the truth of the Scriptures" which untaught people vaguely imagine to be possible and even necessary. A similar series of remarks might be made on the verification of the Sacraments of the Church, as being the same as those originally instituted by our LORD, and ever practised by His people. But, passing now to our immediate subject, it will not be difficult to see that the Apostolicity of the Ministry, if fairly examined with equal patience, admits of the SAME kind of proof, as either the SACRAMENTS or the SCRIPTURES of the Church. Indeed there scarcely seems a possibility of any traditive truth being supported by stronger evidence than we have for the fact of the Succession; so that if this be not true, it appears impossible to say what proof we could ever have to substantiate any such fact.

So far back indeed as any genuine general records of past events exist, we may boast that our Apostolical records exist. So that during these latter, which may be called the literary ages of the world, we may trace the existing record of the Succession in our principal dioceses for many centuries. But this is not the kind of evidence which we could speak of, as so abundantly satisfactory ; nor could we esteem it so, even if it reached to the Apostles' days, and were cleared of all those doubts of its genuineness, which we before alluded to. (page 47.) It would not be satisfactory, for this simple, though little thought of reason, namely, That a Succession of Bishops in one See, is not and cannot ordinarily be, a succession of one and the same Apostolical line. So that if, for example, we should produce a list of every Archbishop of Canterbury to the very first, who was consecrated by a French Bishop, and should then add the name of every one that had preceded that French Bishop in his see, up to the Apostles' days, still we should not have proved the existence of any One line of Apostolical descent. No single line of Succession confined to a single Church is possible. Every newly ordained Bishop in every See comes of a new line ; and that a threefold line, as we shall presently notice. In addition to which, it should be borne in mind, that the Succession was

transmitted in many lines, even from the beginning. Endeavour to examine these points more in detail.

We learn from Eusebius, that the Apostles selected various parts of the world as the separate fields of their labour. And wherever there was an Apostle, there was one who had the power (which he did not neglect to use) of transmitting the grace of the Ministry of CHRIST; consequently there must have been several lines of Ministerial Succession from the first. Probably every Apostle ordained some, as "overseers," "presidents," of Churches; and so became an originator, not of one, but of several, lines of Apostolical grace. If each of the Twelve had ordained but one, there would still have been twelve such lines Apostolical: but since the indefatigable Apostles doubtless did much more than this, there must have been many Ministerial lines, from the very first. We are putting ourselves therefore in a very false position when, in arguing with Romanists, we allow them tacitly to assume, as they seem to do, that there was but one line of Apostolic Ministration transmitted from the beginning. But this error will be more apparent by examining farther.

Let us endeavour to look at the case both

historically and practically, that so we may see not only its past, but also its present bearings. In so doing we may be led to understand its principle more clearly. When, at any time, a Bishopric might become vacant in the Church, and a new Bishop was to be consecrated thereto by the "laying on of hands," by whom was this solemn rite to be performed? Take, for example, a Bishop of Antioch. He dies, and a new one is to be consecrated.—Who is to do it?—Several, probably, unite in "laying hands on him" with prayer and fasting. (Acts xiii. 3.) Suppose one of them to be the Bishop of Alexandria; then the next question must be—Who consecrated *him*? and those who were his coadjutors at Antioch? And it might take us to as many different Churches to decide this point, as there were Bishops at that consecration. By the laws and practice of the Church¹, it is necessary for three Bishops, if possible, to be present and unite in the Consecration of every new Bishop. Now suppose another of the three, in the case just given, to have been a Bishop of Rome; then to trace the Apostolical Succession we must proceed to ask, who conse-

¹ Originating probably from a *literal* interpretation of Matt. xviii. 20. Just as the bowing at The Blessed Name seems derived, by Catholic and pious practice taking *literally* Philippians ii. 10.

crated that Bishop of Rome?—Not the previous Bishop of Rome; for he, probably and almost invariably, would be dead before his Successor was appointed. Then, of course it must needs be some foreign Bishop, assisted by *two* others from different parts of Christendom. And then the question would widen still farther, as each of *their* ordinations would have to be examined. And so the inquiry would have to proceed, widening from Bishop to Bishop, and from Church to Church, till we might arrive, if possible, at the first Apostolic consecration of at least *one* of the long line, through which the manifold grace had flowed. Except in the case of the translation of a Bishop from one See to another (a practice unsanctioned by primitive antiquity) it would never happen that the *same* line of Succession would be at all continued in any one Church, even during two succeeding Episcopates. And, even in that case, it would be mingled with the Succession of the two other Bishops, who had joined in the new consecration. Hence a Succession of Bishops in any one Church is *not* a Succession of the same spiritual line of descent. Nay, if we had no more to allege than the line of the Bishops of a particular Church, even though we could enumerate them quite up to the Apostles, we should not have proved

a valid Succession. But rather the reverse; because it must have been very possible that some one, or more, of the line might have died suddenly, before the ordaining of the Successor; in which case the Succession would be lost, unless some *other* Church were applied to. It is plain that no particular Church, whether in Constantinople, Canterbury, or Rome, can pretend to possess an exclusive line of Apostolic grace. It is plain that no Church can be strictly said to "derive its orders" from another. And it only evinces a want of thinking, for any man to say, for example, "that such and such a Church derives its orders from the Church of Rome." Every one must have observed the false position in which English Churchmen have allowed themselves to be put, by overlooking this simple point. They have thus admitted, practically, that the Church of Rome had a private line of Apostolical Succession, of which she could impart to others!—forgetting that the Bishop of Rome himself is necessarily indebted to the Bishops of three other Churches for *his own* consecration¹. The Succession is and

¹ And our false position is frequently increased by our tacitly admitting the *popular* antithesis between ourselves and the continental Churches, which are taken *in a mass*—and called, all together, "The Church of Rome!"—Thus we practically overlook the *fact*, That the Church of Rome is one *particular* Italian Church: and so increase our own apparent difficulty.

must be CATHOLIC, coming through all the Bishops of the Holy Church throughout all the world. And in this lies our security. Just as our persuasion of the genuineness of the Scriptures arose, not from our seeing the originals, or the earliest copies, but from the united testimony and criticism of Christian men; so our conviction of the validity and necessity of the Succeeding Ministry results from a like Catholicity of testimony. Here too, as with the Scriptures, we have unquestioned phenomena, (the whole history of the Catholic world,) which can only be explained by admitting the *fact*. The Church of Rome has no more preserved our Orders, than she has our Bibles. And in this fact lies our chief security, that no particular Church, in Rome or elsewhere, has the Succession in its keeping, so as to be able either to keep it, or fatally corrupt it; for it is CATHOLIC.

And further: That very intricacy of the interwoven Catholic line, which renders it so impracticable a thing to trace the individual private Succession of any Bishop upwards to the Apostles, gives it an amassed mightiness, and hitherto uncalculated strength, when tracked downwards from the beginning. The twelve Apostles began it, by ordaining the first Bishops; and when in the very next generation the practice be-

came established, of three Bishops assisting at every fresh consecration, it was at once morally impossible to pervert, or intercept the grace Apostolical. In the very next generation any three Bishops who came to a fresh Ordination, would each bring a three-fold Succession, so as to convey the Grace which had flowed through nine different Churches. The difficulty of failure would thence be still further augmented in the next generation, and the next. And what would be even at so early a stage, a moral impossibility, would needs go on accumulating from age to age. So that if at any time by any possibility, the Church's vigilance was defeated, and one of the ordaining Bishops was of doubtful Apostolicity, there were two more united with him, and so preserving the grace of the institute¹. This was in accordance with the very first of the extant Apostolical Canons², which enacts, "Let a Bishop be ordained by two or by three Bishops" (and the larger number was almost invariably required). The strictness with which

¹ See Notes, No. II.

² Of the authenticity of the first fifty at least of the Apostolical Canons, there can now be no doubt. They consist of those rules which had grown up in the Church in the Apostles' days, and the first hundred years after them. They seem to have been composed very early indeed, but gathered together about a hundred years after the death of St. John, (probably, it is said, by Clement of Alexandria) and they are quoted as *ancient*, about a hundred years later.

this was kept up, is borne witness to alike by Fathers¹, and Councils, and Historians, from the very beginning. And if this were not unequivocally and universally the case, (as it certainly is, so as to make quotation and reference seem like affectation,) it would be easy to bring abundant and overbearing evidence of another kind. For the watchful care and pains of all the Churches in the matter of Ordinations is just as notorious, as that Christianity existed and prevailed in the world. The very faults of the early Christians, no less than their virtues, contributed to secure the Succession. Far indeed from lethargy were those times. Abounding heresies, mutual jealousy, and religious zeal, all combined to augment the Church's watchfulness. And, above all, the vigilantly sustained Discipline, by which the whole community was so interwoven, that the greatest and smallest affairs of Christian concern were alike communicated to the whole body. Not only would any new ordination be known in each of the three Churches from which the ordaining Bishops came; but it was very presently notified also to the Metropolitans² by Episcopal letters.

¹ See the Canons of Nice, and the earlier ones of Ancyra and Neocesarea, in Routh's edition of the Scriptor. Opus. and the Rel. Sacr. vol. iii., and Tertullian adv. Hær. c. 36.

² Such was the extent of discipline indeed, that even com-

And beyond this, the election of a Bishop was a matter well known, and publicly canvassed. It was not a thing which (like the Canon of Scripture) might have been for a time kept to themselves, by the learned. No, the common people knew perfectly of the transaction. An infraction of an Apostolic rule, even in a minor point, was clamorously echoed from Church to Church, so that it was rarely ventured on; much less would it be suffered in any important thing. Even evil men in their day were obliged to conform to the outward rules of the faithful; or they found an universal outcry against them. The State had then nothing to do with the matter; and the people (such was their temper and disposition) would have thought of owning a heathen for a Bishop, as soon as a man not duly ordained. Nay, there was even a holy emulation among the Churches; in consideration of which we might in a qualified sense, admit an additional kind of sacredness and certainty, so to speak, in the Succession of those Episcopates, which were noted for peculiar carefulness; as in the Ante-Nicene times that of Alexandria appears to have been.

So was it from the first.—And in every submon Christians in passing temporarily to another Church, had to take letters of communion from their Bishop.

sequent generation of Christians, as we thus see, the intricacy of the Succession, and consequently the difficulty of breaking it, would be more and more intensely augmented ; as if indeed utterly defying the unfaithfulness or fraud of man to set it aside. Whatever else has at any time been charged against the Catholic Church, it has never been said, that she failed in duly Ordaining her Bishops ; and even if this could be shown, still a failure in one part would not touch the rest ¹. To break up the Succession of the Apostolic Ministry nothing less, indeed, seems to be required than a self-destroying conspiracy of the Church Universal.

We possess then all the Evidences of this illustrious fact, which human testimony can furnish, or human industry bring together. Universal witnesses to support it ; and not one against it.—Scriptures,—Canons,—Councils,—Fathers,—and Churches,—the learned and the common people—all evidencing one thing ; and even heretics and infidels not denying it as fact ;—a fact too, which they are forced to see has gathered and still shall gather fresh mightiness, as centuries roll on ² ! For on the heads of the present

¹ See Notes, No. II.

² “ Per Successiones Episcoporum pervenientem (h. e.

Bishops of the Church Universal, there rests the concentrated grace of all the Apostles. And this One Institute—the MINISTRY of CHRIST now stands¹, as at first Divinely set up, an abiding monument of the truth, that HE who determined by the “weakness” and “foolishness” of preaching to save them that believe, has manifested that the “foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men.”—The things which man in all his wisdom contrived, eighteen hundred years ago, are departed like shadows. What GOD ordained remains, and shall “till the consummation of the world.”

Would that the thought of this stupendous

Ecclesiam) usque ad nos, judicantes confundimus omnes eos qui quoquo modo præter quam oportet colligunt.”—S. Irenæus, in lib. iii. adversus Hæreses, c. 3. In which may be seen the Evidence of the teaching of Polycarp, St. John’s disciple.

¹ “Quis enim *fidelis* servus et prudens quem constituit Dominus ejus super domum suam ut det cibos in tempore?”—Quod ad *Apostolos ceterosque Episcopos et Doctores* parabola ista pertineat manifestum est: maxime ex eo quod apud Lucam (cap. xii.) Petrus interrogat dicens, “Ad nos parabolam istam dicis? an ad omnes?”— . . . Ait Apostolus, (ad Cor. c. iv.) “Ita nos existimet homo, ut ministros Christi et Dispensatores Mysteriorum.”—Hic jam quæritur inter dispensatores ut *fidelis* quis inveniatur, &c.—Origen. in Matth. Tractat. xxxi.

grace might ever dwell with each Bishop of the Church Universal, that those words of promise which are the charter of the perpetuity, and the power which Christ hath given might accompany them, as if ever and anon spoken by a heavenly voice,—to elevate, console, and awe their inmost spirit,—“LO, I AM WITH YOU!”—Nay, what thoughts of glory and majesty may well possess us all ! when, putting aside the thankless debates, and presumptuous questionings of men, there rises before our mind’s eye the august vision of the “whole family in heaven and earth;” existing as for ever ONE to The Omniscient EYE, yet mysteriously passing through the long and varying successions of time, age after age ; ministered unto throughout, by ONE succeeding Priesthood¹, ever subsisting “after the power of an endless life,” and so holding together all the members of the eternal family, the living and the dead, in mystic fellowship and communion, even reaching to a “fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ !” Seems it not too great a thought for mind of man to take in, in all its sublime fulness?—And has it not some holy influence, forcing from us the exclamation of felt unworthiness—‘Alas ! for what we *are*,—and what we *should* be?’—It is

¹ See the next Lecture, towards the close.

as if (with earth's pollutions yet unwashed from our spirits) we were borne upwards in vision even "to heaven-gate," and bidden by the Angel of an Apocalypse to look in, and see, though from far, the eternal wonders, behold the forms of distant glory, and feel, though but for a moment, the thrilling air of heaven's own Holiness.

III.

THE OBJECTIONS.

FROM THE EPISTLE ¹.—"Now the GOD of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one towards another, according to CHRIST JESUS. That ye may with One mind and One mouth glorify GOD."—Rom. xv. 5.

OUR object in the present Lecture will, I trust, be the same as that of the Apostle's prayer in these words.....

To confirm the truth of a doctrine, it cannot be supposed necessary to answer all objections and difficulties which ingenuity might raise, for in that case, perhaps, no doctrine would ever be established at all. But when any particular truth has been reasonably set forth and defended, it is a kind of farther recommendation of it with the many to

¹ The second week in Advent.

show, that it is not in reality surrounded by such serious difficulties as might, at first sight, be supposed. Of course it is not right in any man to suspend his belief of a proved truth, simply because it seems to be attended by some difficulties; still we must deal with human nature as we find it; and the majority do not appear to have that bold and honest mind which will maintain right principles in defiance of all obstacles. Neither have they that lofty faith in GOD which will trust Him in the face of seeming improbabilities. Therefore, surely, it is a Christian thing to endeavour, now as far as we are able, to remove such difficulties as obstruct the faith of some, concerning the Ministry of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church: only premising that our object here is not to prove the truth, but to facilitate its reception. The truth of the APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION, being confirmed by foregone proof, cannot, however, be affected by the measure of our success in clearing up difficulties.

It would be a very vain waste of time to attempt to answer many light and frivolous objections; for so far as they are really stumbling blocks to any, they will soon be removed when the doctrine itself is at all understood. Necessarily there will seem to arise from time to time

numberless minor points which, however, any man whose judgment is worth convincing would soon be able to explain for himself. In such proportion as a man apprehends the truth, or, if I may so express it, perceives the spirit and scope of the Catholic Religion, he will come to see, at a glance, the answer which, on Catholic principles, would be given to such and such difficulties. This is the Divine reward of an abiding humble faith.

The common and most influential Objections may admit of a two-fold classification; according as they arise from certain supposed difficulties in the Fact, and in its consequences—or in the Doctrine, and its consequences. And we will at once proceed to consider, first, some difficulties thought to be historically and practically connected with the Fact of the Succession, and its consequences.

The Objection which requires, perhaps, the least trouble and information to make, (and from its indistinctness is rather difficult to grapple with,) and which, therefore, is more frequently employed than any other, is founded on a charge of general and fatal Corruption of Christianity in the middle ages. Granting, it is said, the fact, that there was an unbroken Succession of Bishops in the Church Catholic from the beginning, still the gross

and palpable corruption which so extensively pervaded the Church for ages, was quite sufficient to rob the Succession of all spiritual value. Now this wide and gratuitous assertion might fairly be met by asking the objector—how he comes to know this?—How he comes to be so sure that personal human corruption would wholly obstruct the super-human grace of a Divine institution? How he arrives at such a certainty that the grace of GOD is not mightier than the sin of man? How he *can* be so sure that “where sin abounded,” grace did not “much more abound?” At the best, his objection rests on an unproved assumption in principle—an assumption too, directly at variance with our experience of GOD’S past dealings with man; as the history of the Jewish people bears witness. It would be difficult, as we remarked in our last Lecture, to find any parallel in the history of the Christian Church to the godless impieties of the Jewish, during four hundred years previous to CHRIST’S coming, and yet the anointing oil of the Priesthood was not inefficacious, nor even the Prophetical gifts withdrawn, up to the time of the Advent. Even CHRIST’S persecutor Caiaphas “*prophesied*, being High Priest that year.” It is, therefore, quite unsatisfactory, at the least, to take for granted in this way, that general Corruption would have totally destroyed the grace of Apos-

tolie Succession. The utmost that can, with any show of fairness, be pretended is, that it *might* have done so: and even this ought surely to be proved and not barely assumed as it here is. And even supposing that this were proved, then there would be one thing more to be shown, namely, that the amount of corruption in the Church had really, in point of fact, reached that height, which would overwhelm the grace of Her instituted Ministry. And how this could be certainly proved, even if true, it seems hard to say. In the nature of things, it would ever remain a point uncertain to man, and known to GOD alone. Our objectors, therefore, must assume this point too. And without, perhaps, being much justified in their assumption by the facts of history. For while a lofty moral sense is recognized among men, and so long as humility and self-devotion to GOD, and disinterested, even though untaught, zeal, are reckoned Christian virtues,—so long, in spite of party misrepresentations, will the great body of our Christian forefathers, lay and clerical, in the middle ages bear honourable comparison with us their overweening children. There is more of the spirit of pride than the spirit of CHRIST—more of party vanity than of Catholic generosity—more of historical ignorance than of philosophical wisdom, in these self-congratulatory comparisons between our

meagre conflicting, though (if you will) enlightened, "systems" of Religion and the One high-minded faith, and chivalrous piety, and unsystematized benevolence of our less instructed ancestors. —At all events, the vague objections drawn from these intangible charges of general corruption, very plainly rest on two unproved assumptions—one of the principle and one of the fact. And this, perhaps, is all that is necessary to be shown. For is not the Succession itself a fact of sufficient magnitude to make us pause before we say, it is WORTH NOTHING? This undeniable fact which we allege; this Succession of CHRIST'S Apostolic Ministry; this, GOD'S sustained marvel of eighteen hundred years, is assailed by man's bare assertion, 'that it has been SUSTAINED FOR NOTHING.'

But from among these general charges of Corruption, there sometimes is one singled out, as of a magnitude too great to be doubtful, and to the believer in Revelation too malignant to be of questionable effect: the charge, I mean, of Idolatry. If there were nothing else, it is said, to impede the spiritual grace of the Succession, the Idolatry prevalent in the Churches of the Roman Communion would be amply sufficient. And in proof of this, the case of the Jewish Church is confidently quoted, and the fierce denunciations uttered and

executed against GOD'S favoured people for this especial sin, beyond all others. Now here too we seem to have some unproved assumptions; as well as some false reasoning from the analogy of the Jewish people. First of all there is the assumption which we have previously noticed, namely, that there *is* an amount of personal human sin which *fatally* cuts off, or obstructs, the instituted channels of Divine grace; which has never yet been proved. Then there is the assumption that idolatry is the specific sin whose guilt would have this effect. And this may possibly be true—when the first assumption is made good—but as yet, this has not been proved. And then there is the third assumption, that the Church in the middle ages was so fully and universally guilty of this sin of idolatry, as to cut off the virtue of the Apostolic Succession for ever. And I need hardly say that this has not been proved, for it must in any case remain a doubtful point—beyond our power to settle for certain. And yet how unheedinglly these three assumptions are made use of in the arguments so resolutely and thanklessly urged from the parallel circumstances of the Jews. In the first place it is assumed that the grace of the Jewish institutions was so cut off as to be *lost* on account of idolatry, in the times before CHRIST; which cannot be shown. (Rom. xi. 29.)

For even if it be shown that that Divine grace was quite suspended during a season of idolatry, it would still be certain, that when the Idolatry was repented of and forsaken, the grace reflowed through the accustomed channels of the Mosaic Institutes. And in spite of all past idolatries, it had not been wholly cut off even at the time of the Coming of CHRIST. In the next place there is a false assumption concerning the sin of idolatry itself; which seems to have been so severely visited as it was, because it was the specifically forbidden sin, the protesting against which was one great special object of the national existence of the Jews amidst a godless world. It was not, surely, that GOD abhorred idol worship more than murder, or uncleanness, or injustice; but it was, that “in Judah was GOD to be known”—the one GOD—the forgotten GOD—amidst Gentile polytheism, until the Coming of The Great Mediator. Every Divine interference with that nation seemed to bear this as its reason, “That all the earth may know that there is a GOD in Israel.”—“The LORD, He is the GOD! The LORD He is the GOD!” (Joshua iv. 24; 1 Kings viii. 42, 43; Psalm lx. throughout, &c.) Idolatry in that nation had a heinousness beyond all other sin. And great as the guilt of idolatry must ever be, yet it can hardly be called in the *same* sense, the specific design of

the existence of the Christian Church, to protest against that sin beyond all others. And until this can be made good, the strict parallel cannot be established. In the third place, there is a further assumption of an actual analogy of sinfulness in this particular, between the Jewish and Christian Churches, which is not borne out by facts. Jewish idolatry implied a voluntary and intentional abandonment of the worship of JEHOVAH. Now this can in no wise be affirmed of the worst idolatry of the Romish Hierarchy. No one will say that the Churches in communion with Rome, ever intended to abandon the worship of GOD, for the sake of Angels and Saints. It may be safely and truly said, that their reverence paid to images, and their invocations of saints and angels, are of an idolatrous nature, and calculated to lead, and have led, to idolatry in the common people; but it would be unreasonable and untrue to say, that the sin of the Church of Rome in this matter was the *same* sin as that of the Jews when they deliberately abandoned the worship of GOD. And, therefore, we cannot argue from the one to the other.

If we thus look into this objection fairly, we must see how very little it amounts to. It depends throughout on unproved assumptions. And so far

as we may take the analogy in the case of the Jewish Church, it tells directly against the objection. For there cannot be shown more, at most, than a suspension of the grace of the Mosaic Institutes. And if even Jewish idolatry, when repented of, was no impediment to the reflux of the Divine blessing, so it might be in the Christian Church, even if it could be proved universally guilty of the very sin of the Jews—which it cannot be. In different ages, and at different places, some Churches, in communion with Rome, have paid a highly sinful honour to Saints and their images. The amount of such honour has varied greatly in degree, being more or less sinful, at different times and places; yet at the worst, it was never universal, in any essentially idolatrous degree. And even if it had been, there would only (if the analogy were ever so strictly borne out) be a suspension of still latent Apostolic grace, which any branches of the Church might, on repentance, again enjoy. Far be it from us indeed to palliate the sin, or the danger, of the idolatrous practices of the present Church of Rome, but let a legitimate and not a superficial estimate thereof be made. Instead of being misled by words, let us look to principles. We are bound to protest against all which draws off the heart from the true GOD and only SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST; and therefore against Idolatry in

all its forms. The Churches throughout the world, in communion with that of Rome, have conformed to the practices of the ungodly world in one way; but so have we in another. And as the heathenish conformities and superstitions of Romanists are condemned by St. Paul, when he forbids Christians even to “eat of things offered to idols;” so the infidel coldness and individual selfishness of many Protestants are equally condemned, when we are bidden to flee from covetousness, “which is idolatry.” Whether, with some, we make idols of a particular Church and the Saints,—or with others, make idols of Private Judgment and Mammon, we are alike guilty. Let there be no rude, impatient haste in judging of any Christians. So long as GOD bears with us, we may well bear with one another. Idolatry, worse than the Romish, was sanctioned by some of the Churches of Asia. But still they were addressed as “Churches.” That very sanction of actual heathen idolatry, which the Churches had been warned against, they were guilty of allowing. Of both Pergamos and Thyatira it is said in sharp rebuke, that they permitted some among them “to eat of things offered to idols,” which almost amounted to an admission of those heathen gods. And yet, as CHURCHES still, they are warned to “repent and do the FIRST works,” lest GOD should be provoked

to "remove their candlestick out of his place." So it was not removed as yet.—While the Church Catholic endures perpetually, GOD cuts off from time to time its irrecoverably corrupt branches. But it is for GOD, not us, to do it. And with this, let us dismiss the Objection concerning Idolatry.

One further Objection which we shall notice, as connected with the Fact of the Succession, is that which is urged, though in very different senses, against our own Church in particular, by Romanists on the one hand, and Sectarians on the other; both anxious to deny us the possession of that grace of Apostolical Ministry, which the former desire to monopolize, and the latter to set at nought altogether. 'If (say they with somewhat of *ambiguity* of expression) the Succession is in the Church CATHOLIC, they who are in a state of Schism, cannot be considered to possess it.' Now if we were to admit this position exactly as they state it, they would then have to prove us Schismatics, with respect to the CHURCH CATHOLIC, before they could, on this ground, invalidate our Succession. But, in truth, the objection ought to be a little more carefully looked into. The sin of Schism admits of various degrees. Of course, if it be clearly made out that any part of the Church is (not partly torn only, but) totally severed

from the Body Catholic, it follows, that that part has not that Sacramental grace which the Church alone possesses. But it is certain that in its fullest sense, even Romanists, acknowledging, as they do, Lay-baptism, could not thus cut off as *totally* Schismatic, all who are not of their communion;—all the Churches of the East, and of the farthest West—The American, the Scotch, and our own. And the Sectarians cannot, for very shame, deny us a place in the Universal Church. That very liberality which they need for their own sakes will afford us some shelter too. And as to the special charge of heinous Schism urged against us in the particular matter of our Reformation; if we admit it, as fully, as any party can afford to urge it, it could not go the length of invalidating our Orders Apostolical. The Church Catholic anathematized us not; but only the Bishop of Rome, who had not any right or power so to do¹, but was himself Schismatical and Anti-Christian in attempting it; as St. Irenæus might have taught him. The Church Catholic we would have been content to be judged by². We appealed to a General Council, and after wearisome denial and delay, and artifice, they offered us the mockery of Trent. About a hundred and fifty years after

¹ See the Nicene Canons.

² See Jewel's Apology.

our Reformation, we were recognized as a Church by the Greek Church¹: though the attempt to unite us with them in one Communion unhappily failed. At the time of our Reformation, notwithstanding much temptation, much carelessness, and much sin, our Apostolical Succession seemed marvellously guarded, as by a heavenly hand. The documents are as plain, the facts as sure, as history, invidiously sifted, can make them; so that the candid Romanist and the learned Jesuit cannot deny them. Let any one examine it for himself. Any man, who will deal fairly with facts, will be obliged to own that there have been greater confusions and Schisms² in the see of Rome itself, than in the see of Canterbury.—But they who go the length of affirming a cessation of Apostolic grace in any particular Church or branch of a Church on the ground of total Schism, from the whole body of CHRIST, must excuse us if we ask them for proof of their assertion; and tell them, that until it is proved, we must treat it as a pure (though a very convenient) assumption.

¹ And again, virtually, by the Gallicans.

² This is worthy of their consideration who are apt to be too disheartened at the divisions in the English Church. When the Popedom was a disputed matter for seventy years, what could the plain Catholic laity have thought? It was impossible to avoid the anathema of one Pope or the other, both pretending to infallibility. See Notes No. III.

Those further historical and practical Objections which might be urged against the Apostolical Succession, either in the Church Universal, or in our own particular branch of it, would be such as attempt to throw some degree of doubt on the fact itself¹; and they have already been answered by anticipation in the last Lecture, in which we mainly dwelt on the EVIDENCE of the fact. To notice them here in any greater detail, would therefore be only to repeat needlessly what has been already said. But closely connected with the Objections thus briefly considered to the facts of the Succession, there are generally supposed to be certain fatal CONSEQUENCES, which it may be well just to glance at. "Popery," and its fearful train of practical evils, an infringement of liberty of conscience, and spiritual slavery, are apprehended as the sure result, if the Apostolical line be admitted to be preserved. But is it thus? Are any of us anxious for a "liberty" which is confessedly synonymous with a freedom from obedience to GŌD'S own laws and appointments? Or can we not admit the right of any man to "liberty of conscience," without insisting that such a liberty will suffice to guide him into all truth? Doubtless

¹ Such, for instance, as those glanced at in p. 47, 48, and referred to in Notes No. II. and III.

every man has a right to move on unshackled towards the "heavenly city," but shall he therefore dispense with the only effectual guide? Granting him the fullest "freedom," may he not yet miss his way?—Whoever will take the pains to think of it, will see that this Apostolical doctrine of the Succession, is no other kind of restraint upon liberty of conscience, than any other Apostolical doctrine. It may certainly be said that if a man be not blessed with the blessings of the Church Apostolical, he is in a perilous condition; but it is difficult to see how this affects liberty of conscience, any more than the assertion, "He that believeth not shall be condemned." So that such an Objection is only that of the infidel, in a slightly modified shape, when he complains of the "hardship of not providing for the case of the conscientious unbeliever."

And as to the fear of Popery; that seems a still more strange Objection. Surely the very reverse is the more correct reasoning. If it be a fact capable of proof, and which was believed by all Christians for 1500 years, That there was a true Succession of Ministers from the Apostles—are we not taking the very surest ground against Romanists, when we show, that we possess just such a descended

Ministry, in no degree dependent on communion with *their* Church, or any other single Church? If we could *not* show such a Ministry, then the man, who from examination found out the truth of the necessity of an Apostolic Church, might be obliged indeed to resort to the communion of Rome. So that by asserting our true Apostolical claims, we are so far from giving place to Rome, that we are striking the only effectual blow at her supremacy—we are so far from forcing a man to join the Papacy, that we are offering him his only refuge from its spiritual tyranny. And as to all such half-infidel objections as, ‘that there would be nothing to check the onward advance of corruption and error,’ and the like, if it were thus taken to be unlawful to sin against, or set aside, the Apostolical Succession, in any case; it would be quite enough to reply, that we ought to be content to trust GOD for the success of His own appointed institutions. But there are facts, sufficiently strong to enable us to speak much more explicitly on this head. Among those who threw off the Roman yoke in the sixteenth century, we see, that the Non-episcopal communities of the Continent have gone down into worse than Roman Corruption, “even denying THE LORD that bought them;” from which depth of doctrinal corruption our Episcopal Church has been graciously pre-

served. Not, indeed, that it is right to depend too much on this kind of evidence, popular as it may be. It is better for the Christian to exercise a habit of unenquiring confidence in his Heavenly Father, trusting Him for the "consequences" of His Own appointments, disregarding the sophistries, and fears, and oppositions of the world.

Passing, now, from this class of Practical Objections, let us consider some of those which are supposed to lie against the DOCTRINE of the Succession. They are, indeed, so peculiarly unchristian, so faithless in their principles, and so indefinite in their shape, that it will not be so easy a task to deal with them; but we must briefly attempt it.

One of the commonest and most comprehensive of these objections, is that which is advanced against the whole Doctrine of an Authoritative Ministry in the Church, though more especially against the notion of a Descended Priesthood; viz. That it is a going back to "beggarly elements," a perpetuation of Judaism in the Church. They who urge this, do not scruple to deny all similarity of office between the Christian and the Jewish Priesthood, and they represent it as essentially Anti-christian in any man in these days

to pretend to the Priestly office. "If," say they, "it be even granted that a separate order of Ministers is sanctioned by the Gospel, still it is both arrogant and unscriptural to pretend to institute any sort of parallel between the Christian and the Jewish Ministries." It is strange that any man can speak so thoughtlessly, who has had the advantage of reading even an English Testament. Not only is the principle of the necessity of a proper Ministry assumed throughout the Christian Scriptures, but the very analogy which is now denied between the Christian and the Jewish ministries is *throughout* assumed, and sometimes expressly insisted on, and drawn out. If it were so dangerous and Anti-Christian an error to pretend to a Priesthood in the Church, at all resembling that of the Temple, surely the Apostles would have been especially anxious to avoid using any expressions which should seem to imply any such thing. St. Paul's language, if not to be taken simply as he employed it—that is, if it were not literally *true*—was calculated much to mislead. It could not have been safe, when the early Church had so strong a tendency to Judaize, to make use of what may be called "priestly terms" and allusions. And yet this is done continually in the New Testament, and even as a "matter of course." Observe, for instance, that sentence of St. Paul,

specially concerning the ancient Priesthood, but so widely expressed as to convey a general principle, assumed as known to be equally true now as of old—"No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of GOD as was Aaron." (Heb. v. 1, 4). So the Holy Baptist at the beginning of the Gospel puts forth this as an Evangelical principle, concerning any Divine Ministry, not excepting Christ's Own; "A man can *take unto himself* nothing" [margin]. (John iii. 27, &c.) St. Paul likewise calls CHRIST Himself "the Apostle and High-priest," linking the two ideas together—joining the Apostolical and the Priestly offices—but saying that even HE "glorified not Himself to be made an High-priest¹." The FATHER "sent" Him; and "as His FATHER sent HIM, so He sent His Apostles." And what, again, might we not fairly conclude from such an allusion as the following, even if there were nothing more clear? "WE have an *altar* whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle;" (Heb. xiii. 10.) which occurs immediately after the injunction concerning the Ministry, "remember THEM" (v. 7). And in the verses immediately following, we find a similar injunction, and similar sacrificial allusions; (v. 11, 15—17.) Must we not think that the

¹ Connected with this part of the subject few books are so important to be read as "Johnson's Unbloody Sacrifice."

Apostle recognized *some* analogy between the Jewish and the Christian Ministries¹? But we have, in addition to such manifold allusions, some passages much more direct and indisputable. In writing to the Corinthians, St. Paul places the Eucharistic Table of the LORD in a position precisely parallel with that of the Jewish Altar, and founds his whole argument on it; (1 Cor. x. 13, &c.) and places together on the same footing the Ministries of the Temple and of the Church. (ch. ix. 13.) His argument for the right of the Christian Minister to a temporal maintenance is wholly derived from the analogy of the Jewish Priesthood; this would, then, be no argument, if there were no analogy. His words are, "Do ye not know that they which Minister about holy things, live of the things of the altar? *even so hath* THE LORD *ordained*, that they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." Evidently the former Ministry is assumed to be the pattern of the *latter*. But in another place, it is still more fully carried out. The Apostle shows the Corinthians, that the analogy between the two Ministries was such as to raise the Christian Ministry immeasurably superior to the Jewish, both in privilege and power. What Jewish Priest could ever use

¹ See also, among others, that striking passage, Rom. xv. 15.

such exalted language as St. Paul had employed concerning the punishment of sin? (1 Cor. v. 5.) or its pardon? (2 Cor. ii. 10, 11. 15.) And so he declared his Ministry to be much superior to that of Moses himself. (2 Cor. iii. 7.) “If the Ministration of condemnation (the Jewish Ministry) be glory, how much more doth the Ministration of righteousness (the Christian) *exceed* in glory? For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of that *which excelleth*; for if that which was done away was glorious, *much more* that which remaineth is glorious.” Moses, he further shows, had a “veiled,” we an “unveiled” Ministry. “WE all with unveiled face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord.” (v. 18.) “We preach not *ourselves*,” indeed, he adds, “but CHRIST JESUS the LORD, AND Ourselves your servants for JESUS’ sake; *for* GOD . . . hath shined in OUR hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of His glory.” (ch. iv. 6; see also ch. v. 19, 20.)—The promises of abiding grace, “enduring” mercy, and perpetual blessing to the ancient Israel, are commonly enough thought to await fulfilment in the Church: so also, shall not the ancient promises of an everlasting Priesthood, which were not fulfilled to the Jews, be amply fulfilled in the CHURCH?—The ONE Priesthood of CHRIST “continueth ever” manifested in HIS

Church according to His will ; “ not after the law of a carnal commandment, *but* (απαρβατον) *after the power of an endless life.*”

Perhaps it may be thought needless to dwell longer on this objection to the doctrine of the proper Ministry of the Church. The other objections, however, which are commonly urged, are of so similar a character as to be partly answered already, by what has been said. It may be useful, nevertheless, to bestow a few more remarks on them. Some who scarcely like to object to the Doctrine of the Ministry in open terms, are given to speak of the “ SUCCESSION” as a “ carnal” doctrine, though without clearly showing us any other doctrine to supply its place. It would be well for those who lightly adopt such language, if they would weigh its *meaning*, before they make such use of it. If by calling the Succession a “ carnal” doctrine, they mean that the doctrine is very different from, and perhaps inconsistent with all that *they* take to be “ spiritual,” there is nothing very fearful in the charge. Only it is scarcely consistent with Christian humility to adopt from Scripture a term of opprobrium, in order to make of it a private use of our own. Such objectors may be reminded that there were some in the Church of Corinth, who took themselves to be “ spiritual” enough to dispute the

APOSTLE'S directions in some Church matters. And St. Paul replied simply by asserting his Ministerial authority, however "carnal" that might be thought. His words are, "If any think himself to be a prophet, or *spiritual*, let him acknowledge that the things that I write are the commandments of the LORD." (1 Cor. xiv. 37.) At all events the charge of "carnality" ought to be a little explained, that we may know what meaning to affix to it. In what sense, for instance, the "Doctrine of laying on of hands," can be called carnal, and not also the doctrine of "Baptism by water?"

But there are those who somewhat modify this objection, and say, that our doctrine is too "technical" to be worthy of a Divine Revelation. That is to say, it is unworthy of the spirituality and dignity of CHRIST'S religion to be thus necessarily allied to outward and sensible forms. But surely this is as pure an *assumption*, as all the *other* objections which have been considered. At least, it remains to be *proved*; and so far as the analogy of GOD'S previous dealing with mankind may guide us, we should be inclined perhaps to a very different conclusion. What, for instance, could be more "technical" than the Scriptural account of the sin of Adam? The moral aspect of the offence is *not* dwelt on; it is simply

presented to us as a disobedience of a set injunction, a failure in formal allegiance.—What, again, could be more “technical” than the acceptable sacrifice of Abel?—Or the trial of Abraham’s faith?—And might we not point in a similar way to the whole system established by GOD among the Jews?—Or let the more Spiritual institute of “Prophecy” be considered. There was much in it that would now be thought very “technical.” The prophet Balaam¹, though an unholy man, had power to “bless and curse;” there was a potency in his word. And then we read of the “schools of the prophets.” And the Spirit of Prophecy seemed poured out in so technical and systematic a way, that there were certain places, and hours, and modes², in which the Spirit was in active energy, in such wise that strangers who came near were affected by it. So we read, that king Saul and his messengers, when they came to the company of prophets at Ramah, all began likewise to prophesy; (1 Sam. xix. 23.) just as Saul himself had done on another occasion, previous to his anointing (ch. x. 10). Or, to come to a later period, how “technical” does the Ministry of the Baptist appear throughout! And yet our Lord submitted to his “technical” Baptism, saying,

¹ See Notes No. I.

² 1 Kings xxii. 24.

“*Thus* it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” And surely we might make the same kind of remarks on the whole life of our LORD Himself. Look at the formal Genealogies at the beginning.—Is it not a strangely “technical” appointment, that a grace so divine as that which redeemed mankind must needs flow through the line of David? And be recorded so scrupulously, as though each link of the chain were important?—And in all that CHRIST did, is there not much that might by some be called “technicality?” His conformity to the Jewish ritual: His temptation, His replies to the Jews, His difficulties, questions, and dark sayings, and many of His miracles, might surely by many be so esteemed¹. And then again, His Church and Sacraments: and His injunctions to the Apostles; as that, to “begin at Jerusalem” in their preaching, which they technically obeyed to the letter. (Acts xiii. 46.) But enough is plain, surely, from all this to show us that the technical nature of an institution *may* be no objection whatever to the Divine sanction of it. At all events, the contrary is an assumption requiring proof. Nay, further; if it be true, that man’s sight cannot at present endure the light of unveiled truth, then it may be that some sort of technical expres-

¹ As, for instance, the cure of the blind man, by the clay. Or that of the lepers.

sion of truth might even be expected in a Divine revelation. GOD manifests Himself “in part,” and “in part” He shrouds Himself from us still.

But after all that has been said, there will be some who will rejoin : If this doctrine were of so great an importance, why is there not some much plainer statement about it in Scripture—something, that is, which might put it beyond doubt? It might be worth considering in reply to this, whether such a question does not arise from a complete misapprehension of the nature and design of the Inspired Volume? But, in any case, it is evident that the Socinian, or even the Infidel might easily ask the very same thing. The Scripture testimony to the doctrine of the TRINITY, plain as we think it, is evidently not *so* plain as to prevent doubts and differences of opinion. Can that be a valid objection against the doctrine of the Succession, which is none whatever against the TRINITY? The Arians of the fourth age would gladly have accepted of any thing in “Scripture-terms,” and pleaded hard for leaving the truth of the TRINITY in a (so called) “Scriptural” vagueness of expression. But the Catholic Church determined otherwise. And Her interpretation of those Scriptures which contain the Apostolical Succession, is quite as uniform and unequivocal as

of those which contain the truth of the HOLY TRINITY.

Here, while leaving this class of objections also, (raised, like the former, on pure assumptions) we must not omit to remind any who are trying by the aid of such objections to rid themselves of the Catholic truth, that there is, at best, a fearful uncertainty in the course which they are so pursuing—an uncertainty which seems not to have one solid advantage of any kind to recommend it.—But now before terminating our remarks on the manifold objections of men to this truth of GOD, it is important perhaps to make reference to some of the supposed, and the real Consequences of admitting this Apostolical Doctrine. In speaking of these, perhaps, our opponents manifest less knowledge and more unfairness, than with respect to any other of the topics in debate. The utmost pains are often taken to make out, on the ground of our “exclusiveness,” a case of bigotry, superstition, and intolerance. So that there is the more occasion to direct attention to these, which, imaginary as they are, form, nevertheless, the most cogent objections in the popular mind.

In the first place, whoever puts forth any statement concerning any subject, as the *truth*, neces-

sarily implies that a different statement would be false ; and therefore liable to all the consequences of the falsehood. Whatever is put forth as TRUTH, is necessarily *exclusive*. And is the Catholic doctrine more chargeable with “exclusiveness,” on this ground, than the doctrine of any party, or even individual?—When any man says that he thinks himself *right* in any matter, he virtually says that those who differ from him are *wrong*. And as to the future consequences of being wrong ; it will scarcely be denied, that the Sectarians are generally far more reckless in pronouncing judgments on that matter than *we*.

The popular shape in which this objection is most successfully brought forward is, That the doctrine of the Succession “unchurches” all the Protestant communities of Christendom, which are not Episcopal. This is exaggerated and represented as the very acme of intolerance, and equivalent to a judgment on our part that they must all necessarily perish everlastingly. It is melancholy to see the art with which this misrepresentation is brought forward to check any half-formed conviction of the truth, such as arises from a candid review of the unanswerable Evidence. It only shows us that there are some minds which it is hopeless to attempt to convince.

Let us, however, look at the objection rapidly, first, in an historical, and then in a theoretical light. Doubtless, if the Apostolic Succession be admitted, it follows that there can be no certainty of valid Sacraments apart from it. And those communities cannot be pronounced to be true Churches, which have no Succession. Now, upon this it is argued, that there is an inconsistency between us and our early Reformers: for, that *they* did not pronounce the Continental Protestants to be “unchurched,” which our principles oblige us to do; and that therefore we are more “Popish” and bigoted than they.—How far this is the real state of the case, they best can judge who are best acquainted with the writings of our Reformers. As to *their* principles, they are certainly not so doubtful as to be only arrived at by a silent deduction from their actions. Take, for instance, Archbishop Cranmer. His opinions, even in his later years, after he had well looked into the matter, and had passed through some change of sentiments, are left on record in his Sermons¹. In speaking of the necessary and exclusive Succession of, the Ministry, he goes to the utmost extent of the Catholic Doctrine. But it may be said, generally, that the necessity of Apostolic Ordination

¹ Sermons on Baptism, Absolution, and the Eucharist.

was not a debated point at the Reformation. And those, abroad, who eventually departed from the Succession, did it with so much reluctance, and with such ample admission of their regret¹, that it could only be regarded as a temporary affliction of the Church. When Rome was exerting all her strength against the Reformed, it surely would have been deemed an uncalled for severity, had the English Church been forward to condemn the Continental brethren; especially as they did not defend the *principle* of separation from the Episcopacy; but just the reverse. It was surely enough that our Reformers asserted their own principles, (as they plainly did²) without proceeding formally to condemn their “less happy³” brethren abroad. Add to all which, the fact, that that generation of Protestants had, all of them, been baptized in the Catholic Church; and most of their Ministers *had* received Episcopal Ordination; so that even the next generation might receive valid Baptism. It would be natural of course to pronounce a very careful judgment, if any, concerning such persons. It might have been difficult to say that such communities, however imperfect, were

¹ Bp. Hall's Episcopacy by Divine Right, p. 6.

² See Jewel, and Hooker. Ed. Keble. And Notes, No. IV.

³ “Non sumus *adeo felices.*” Words of the President of the Synod of Dort.

“not Churches.” This might have fully accounted for the reserve of our Reformers, even had it been greater than it was ; more especially as the restoration of the lost Succession might not only have been hoped for, but, at one time, even expected ¹. But every one must surely perceive the difference of *our* position from that of our Reformers. We assert precisely the same principles, and in their *own* language. But *we* have to act towards men who on principle *reject* the Succession ; who are not *for certain* possessed of any Catholically Ordained Teachers, or so surely Baptized people : and who are perpetuating this awfully *doubtful* and Schismatical state of things. If in our circumstances we were to imitate what is thought the reserve of our Reformers, we might be fairly suspected as not holding their *principles*.

But the theoretical view of this objection is, perhaps, still more important to be considered. Let any man examine, what this charge of our unchurching so many other Protestants really amounts to, at the utmost. To what extent of “uncharitableness” does our theory oblige us?—And, first of all, how can we obviate the practical difficulty already alluded to, which is urged with

¹ Melancthon Ep. Luthero, quoted by Bishop Hall.

so much confidence, that unordained ministers of many sects, have so large a measure of spiritual success?—It is remarkable that they who urge this, do not see how *variously* it is often applied to support the most opposite and jarring sentiments. And who can ever decide on the real value of any such appeals? We might admit, safely, that good has, at times, been done by unordained teachers, and yet, in that, admit nothing inconsistent with the exclusive Catholic claims of the Ordained Ministry. It has often been argued that even the Heathen Philosophy and the Mahometan Theism, were over-ruled as GOD'S instruments of good, though evil in their nature: and the corruptest kind of Christianity may be well admitted to be much better than either of them¹. We cannot indeed allow the distorted estimate, which human vanity makes of its own good doings; but we will not question GOD'S sovereignty over man's sin, from which He often brings good. We think it wrong not to "receive CHRIST" (Luke ix. 53.); and "follow the Apostles;" but we would not

¹ A parallel case, to a certain extent, may be seen in Judges xvii. 5, 6, 13. &c. The priesthood of the LORD was associated partly with idolatrous worship. Micah had graven images and teraphim, yet he, with a Levite for a Priest, was partly blessed by GOD. It is not for us to say how far GOD may bless those who are not strictly obeying Him; nevertheless we must not calculate on this. Obedience is still a duty.

“call down fire from heaven.” We think that it “shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment” than for a wilful rejecter, or non-receiver of the Apostles; but *we* judge not. They are in God’s hands. (Matt. x. 14.)—We have before said that we pronounce no private judgment on others.

And let it not be supposed that this is only a tacit way of avoiding a difficulty, to which our principles fairly conduct us. If they be honestly looked at, the Catholic principles have in them far more of real charity than any others. There is a large sense, in which every Baptized man is included in the Catholic Church, and may be, according to his measure, partaker of Her privileges; though he may not trace the grace to its true source, but may mistake the hand that blesses him¹. And the wideness of the Catholic principle, as to the bestowal of Baptismal grace, ought not to be lost sight of here. In the Church there seems to have been recognized a sort of threefold validity of Baptism. The first², as ordinarily re-

¹ That is; Many who have departed and joined the sects in sincerity and ignorance, may be attributing to human causes that re-invigoration of spiritual life, which is but the forgotten Baptismal grace of Christ, mercifully “*in them*, springing up to everlasting life.” (John iv. 14; John vii. 38, 39.) This may be also, one of God’s means of humbling and reforming His too careless Church.

² John iii. 5.—The ordinary “entrance to the Kingdom.”

ceived from a Minister of the Church ; the second ¹ pertaining to the grace of martyrdom, or “ Baptism by blood ;” and the third ² even extending in cases of extreme necessity to Christian Confession, and the *earnest desire* of the Sacrament. Doubtless, it is The All-seeing GOD alone who can decide on any individual case. Yet it is easy to see how the Catholic doctrine does at least open a wide door of charitable *hope* ³. How many even of those who are outwardly Schismatical, may not be *wholly* so, we can never know here. How far the sincerity of some, or the circumstances of others, may avail as excuses before GOD, HE only can decide. Still, while our charity “ hopeth all things,” we know that where there is *doubt* only, there may be danger ; and charity itself would oblige us to warn ; for we think there *is* this peril ; and we warn those Churchmen of their greater peril, who sanction Religious principles, or frequent even doubtful assemblies, which the Church acknowledges not. They not only endanger themselves,

¹ Matt. xx. 22. ; and perhaps 1 Cor. xv. 29.

² Rom. x. 10. (which conveys the principle) ; and Luke xxiii. 42.

³ Our own Church recognizes this doctrine ; speaking in her Baptismal Office of the “ great necessity of the Sacrament *where it may be had ;*” and in the Catechism of its “ *general necessity.*” CHRIST affirmed generally the necessity of being “ born of water,” as the preliminary of “ entrance to His kingdom,” yet He promised admission thereto to the dying thief, who *confessed* Him with a penitent heart.

but by their example may fatally mislead the souls of their brethren. But let us take the extremest case that can be alleged, namely, that of persons wilfully guilty of total and deliberate Schism from the Apostolic Church. When we deny to such all share in the Church's peculiar grace here, or glory hereafter, are we denying them aught which they do not deny themselves? aught which they even wish to claim? For instance—The Church has ever maintained that Baptism in the Apostolic community conveys the most exalted and unearthly blessings, and by consequence maintains, that the unbaptized possess them not. But is it not a fact, that all such persons totally reject the notion of there being any spiritual value in Baptism? Does our uncharitableness then place them in a worse position than that which they voluntarily choose for themselves, and resolutely defend? Surely we are rather taking a high view of our own privileges and grace in CHRIST, than in any degree depriving others of theirs. We leave them where they place themselves. And it seems hard to call this a want of charity. It is impossible to say that we are depriving of Sacraments those who do not even pretend to them, except in form. It is strange and uncandid to say, that we UN-church those, who (in our sense of the word) do not even pretend to be Churches.

This charge of want of charity generally proceeds, too, from those who ought certainly to be the very last to bring it forward. They are our commonest assailants who themselves so gloomily narrow the circle of possible salvation, as to affirm that all shall inevitably perish, except that exceedingly small number whom they esteem in their peculiar sense, “spiritual,” and “converted.” We, on the contrary, whatever we think of the Church’s Privileges, hold with St. Peter, that “in every nation he that feareth GOD, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of HIM¹ ;” and yet we are thought “uncharitable.” Far from condemning on so tremendous a scale as they will venture to do, we pronounce no judgment personally on any:—and yet they call us “uncharitable.” Doubtless we see unspeakable danger in the very idea of differing or dissenting and departing from the CHURCH² as descended from the Apostles of CHRIST; but methinks there is no bigotry in saying that.—“Now may the GOD of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to CHRIST JESUS !”

¹ Acts x. 35.

² See, on this subject, and generally, on the danger of Schism, S. Jerome’s Ep. 69, &c. And concerning the peril of departing from the Bishops Catholic, see S. Ignatius ad Smyrn. ad Trall. et ad Phil.

And now, at the close of this review of the objections urged by vain man against the firm, abiding truth of GOD, it seems impossible wholly to repress the feeling which rises, on looking back on such melancholy indications of mental perversity.—The view of a series of such objections to such a Truth, accompanied as they are by a guilty host of unnamed minor objections, taking shelter beneath them, is almost enough to dishearten the Minister of CHRIST. It seems as if there were arranged side by side all the elaborate tokens of a Father's most tender care for a reckless family; and of their thankless contempt for his love and watchfulness. The very design of CHRIST'S Ascension was to give "Apostles and prophets" to his people¹; but now there are objections to them all.—It were surely a revolting task to take by the hand the young but corrupted heir of some princely domain, and lead him through the stately halls of his fathers, and find him heartlessly sneering at their massy and unbroken grandeur, and treating with a rude contempt the mighty things and the noble of past times—"Objecting" to every thing! Mocking the now useless towers and unneeded battlements—Objecting to them as 'contrivances of cowardice.' Or pointing to the

¹ Ephesians iv. 8—12.

chapel, to the Cross, or to some ancestral effigy of Prayer—"Objecting" to them as symbols of decaying superstition! It would be miserable to witness such a wretched lack of natural piety in the heart of a child.—But is there not some parallel to it in what is seen among us, whensoever we "go about our Spiritual Zion, telling the towers thereof, marking well Her bulwarks, and considering Her palaces, to tell it to the generation following?" We are scarcely listened to with patience by many: and some even scorn to accompany us through our time-honoured courts. Too many modern Christians, thankless, cold-hearted children of our Holy Church, come very little short of realizing the picture we have drawn! They carelessly tread our solemn aisles, and we bid them move reverently "because of the angels¹." And they wonder at our "superstition" and "weakness!" And "the fathers" (say they) were ignorant men, and their works the cumbrous records of departed folly! And as to the Saints of early days—there are decided objections to their views; objections to their rules of sanctity; objections to their prayers and customs, and heaven-ward observances; objections, in a word, to almost every

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 10.

thing received from the Holy Founders of our Faith, and loved by all our Fathers !

The long line of the “ departed just,” like a still-continued choir of angels of Bethlehem, seem to be ever silently heralding “ peace on earth, good will to men,” while men weary not of raising objections thereto ; as if deeming it a hardship to be blessed !—Such is the Church’s mysterious history. An ALMIGHTY GOD ever “ waiting to be gracious :” and man rebelling against HIM ever !—GOD sending down HIS gifts of grace : Man spurning the blessing !—GOD “ bowing HIS heavens and coming down.” And man “ objecting” still !—“ How long shall it be, O LORD, to the end of these wonders !”

IV.

THE SUMMARY.

FROM THE EPISTLE¹.—"All the building fitly framed together groweth into an Holy Temple in the LORD."—EPH. ii. 2.

THE broad and essential distinction between the Catholic and the Rationalist views of the Christian Ministry, seems necessarily to imply distinct conceptions of the whole Christian Religion. This was briefly alluded to in our first Lecture, but must now be more fully drawn out (though, I fear, at the risk of some repetition) in order to show the bearing of the respective doctrines of the Ministry on the general Religious theory, and on the two classes of interpretation of Holy Scripture. This is the more necessary, because no arguments, however clear, will effectually touch the mind so long as a fundamentally incorrect notion of their whole

¹ The Feast of St. Thomas.

subject matter is inwardly cherished. So long as one theory is exclusively and implicitly relied on, the arguments which are built on another, essentially distinct, may be looked at as difficult, and perhaps unanswerable; still they will not shake the previous faith of the listener. The arguer is moving, so to speak, in a parallel, or even a diverging line, in which his hearer sees, perhaps, no exact flaw, but he is sensible that it touches him not. Thus many will attend to a train of reasoning, see that it establishes its conclusions inevitably, and yet not be morally affected by it—not convinced, not really touched. Their minds fall back on some distinct and cherished principle which they have previously been accustomed to admit, perhaps, without questioning; having been ever taught it, and so relying on it as a sort of “common sense” truth. This has been peculiarly the case in Religious controversy.—A certain view of the general system is received, and unless you can bring a man to think that this may be erroneous,—that is, unless you can shake a man’s faith in himself, and persuade him to call in question or examine even his fundamental notions—you have advanced but little towards convincing him of the truth; notwithstanding the logical accuracy of your reasonings. It is also to be feared that a mistake as to the very ideality of the Christian Religion is not

only very possible, but very common¹. It is not, therefore, with any desire of mere systematizing that these two distinct theories of Christianity are now drawn out; but with a firm persuasion that there is a reality and a practical importance in the distinction.

Doubtless there are many modifications of opinion among Christians; but there are two bases on which they are very generally raised, and perhaps almost necessarily so; a basis of mental Principles, or a basis of Divine Institutions; a basis of intelligible "Doctrines," or of Heavenly Realities; of that which is abstract, or that which is concrete. And the former of these may be (and I trust, without offence) described as the Rationalized, or Sectarian,—the latter is the Catholic basis. The former, at first sight, seems more philosophical and elevated and popular—the latter, more positive, more real, and yet more humbling to the pride of human intellect.

It is with the latter, indeed, that we shall be especially concerned in this Lecture; but we must so far dwell on the former, as may be necessary

¹ See the former series of "Parochial Lectures," On The Holy Catholic Church, Lecture IV. p. 113, &c. in which I have explained this more fully.

for the sake of illustration and contrast. Instead however of formally arguing against the former theory, and attempting to disprove its basis, (which would draw us too far from our object,) let us rather endeavour to develop the true Catholic conception of Christianity, and show its exact coincidence with the literal Scriptures of Truth. An erring Christian man may by observing this be more likely to suspect, at least, the soundness of the opposite conception. There is a power in truth; and it is often as useful to state it clearly as to argue for it. Many men do not see even the apparent ground on which Church principles rest—they do not enter into our theory, so as to understand what they themselves dissent from. And on the other hand, many right-minded believers, from want of sufficient clearness of views, adopt a mode of defence which sanctions, or implies, Sectarian *principle*. How many Dissenters, for example, oppose us, on the ground of our union with the State; or of our having a written Liturgy; or written Sermons; or certain forms and ceremonies; forgetting that these are not specific *Church*-questions; that these might have been otherwise decided among us than they are, i. e. that we might not have been allied to the State, nor have been accustomed to a written Liturgy, nor written Sermons, and yet that our Churchmanship might

have been, in every principle, the same precisely.—And again, how many Churchmen defend our general system just as if the Clergy were the essential, that is, constituent body of the Church ; or defend our Episcopacy with confidence from insufficient texts ; or defend our Apostolicity on the ground of a Threefold order of Ministration being traceable even to Apostolic times : little thinking how far such kinds of defence are inaccurate, and even involve Sectarian principle.

But to resume ;—the popular idea¹ seems to be, that Christianity is a complete Revelation of certain truths concerning GOD and a future state ; and the end to be aimed at, therefore, is the impressing men strongly with those truths, “ applying them” (as the phrase is) “ to individuals.” The Catholic conception is, that Christianity is a sustained Revelation, or Manifestation of realities ; and the great end to be attained is the participation therein.—Thus the Sectarian (according as his sentiments might be) would dwell much on the idea of CHRIST’S moral teaching, as being “ pure” and “ useful ;” or again, would look on His Mediation and Atonement, just as “ doctrine” to be believed. The Catholic would endeavour to regard CHRIST in

¹ See Lect. I. page 27.

a less abstract, a more literally Scriptural way, as The Mysterious Incarnation of Godhead (1 Tim. iii. 16); the now and Ever-existing link between us and DEITY (1 Tim. ii. 5.)—the medium whereby man is united unto GOD! And His mysterious Atonement would be regarded as an awful REALITY ever “manifest” in the Church! (Gal. iii. 1; 1 Cor. xi. 26.)—a REALITY to be partaken of, and more than a bare ‘truth’ to be believed in. (1 Cor. x. 16, 17.) The former would go no further than to think that the end to be attained is, the formation of a certain character in individuals, by certain moral means; and so the whole of the constitutions of Christianity—Scriptures, Sacraments, Ministries, and Churches, are but the means of accomplishing this end. The latter believes much more; namely, that the great end to be attained is the mystical incorporation of an unseen, yet eternal community, called even now, the “kingdom of heaven.” On the one system, we are independent beings: on the other, we are “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” On the one system, it is metaphorically only that we are said to be “one body in CHRIST,” while we really are, and shall only be dealt with, as separate individuals: on the other, the very reverse is assumed; namely, that “we, being many, are one body in CHRIST,” in a mystical and Divine

sense. The question is—which view is more conformable to Holy Scripture?

Now, supposing the Sectarian idea to be fully adequate and right, is there not something very unaccountable, to say the least, even in the structure of the Christian system? Supposing (that is) that we were so discerning, and could see so far into GOD'S designs, as to be able, for instance, to say, that the "conversion," (as it is called) or the moral change of an individual as such, were the sole end, to be produced by certain doctrines inwardly received; and that this is the whole of Christianity:—Is not the institution of what must then seem so strange a rite as 'Baptism with water,' quite unaccountable?—Of course it will be easy to say, that such a rite may be taken as a "type and sign" of spiritual truth; but is this cumbrous explanation satisfactory? Are not mere types and signs out of place, "out of keeping," so to speak, in a system so purely abstract?—At all events, must not all allow, that the existence of such an institution as Baptism (to name no other) is much more in accordance with the CHURCH doctrine of mystical incorporation, than with any other?—Much more suitable to a system which insists on a hidden virtue infallibly conveyed by the ordinance of the SON of GOD, than

to a system which reckons it "not essential," even if right at all? A thoughtful man can hardly fail to perceive, that any such institutes as those which are and ever have been common in all the Churches, are incumbrances to what is now thought the "simplicity of the Gospel,"—are at variance altogether with the modern spirit and principle. If the bringing of certain doctrines to the consciences of individuals were the sole or specific design, what a strangely inapplicable and unwieldy array of means must the whole Church system be! And yet, a Church, and certain institutions therein, are recognised in Scripture. And if so, then the Scriptural means of Christian edification scarcely seem, in the popular sense of the word, "simple;" but rather most elaborate.—By Divine direction, we see a Society of men enrolled, a community essentially distinct from every human one, and therefore exciting much jealousy. To certain of the body a Power is given of receiving or cutting off members; and spiritual consequences of incalculable magnitude seem annexed to the privilege of membership. The powers and prerogatives possessed by these rulers are expressed also in language, however obscure, yet, most solemn. (2 Cor. xiii. 10.) Whatever that language may imply, (Matt. xviii. 18.; 1 Cor. v. 5.) it is certainly Scriptural. There are very weighty expressions in the

Bible, relative to the Christian Ministry; and the Sectarian systems are so far from *needing* them, that they all find them to be "difficulties." And it is equally certain that they mean something. Now, without inquiring here what they do mean, we primarily point out their evident incongruity with a theory which makes individuals every thing, and the Church and Her powers nothing. We would point out that they are quite needless, and even impediments to that brief system which tells a man it is enough to "take his Bible and pray for the personal assistance of the HOLY SPIRIT, and judge for himself." It is quite certain that had the New Testament contained not one word about a Church, a "washing with water," a "laying on of hands," a partaking "of ONE bread," and the like; the systems of Rationalists might still be just what they are. They who reduce Christianity to a code of principles, would lose nothing, by the blotting out of every text containing any trace of Christian Church authority from the Scriptures. And must not any hypothesis of Christianity which is thus partial, be suspected as possibly not commensurate with the Divine teaching of our Heavenly Master? Let us not be mistaken as if we said, that there are not "doctrines" to be believed, and "principles" to be inculcated in Christianity; we only insist that such a statement does

not contain a complete idea of Christianity, and if taken alone, contains a positively false, because inadequate idea. And it is necessary to see the extreme danger of theorizing, where we ought simply to believe, lest our theory should be more compact than complete, more simple than true.

But let us attempt now still further to review the whole subject in an analytical and practical way, apart from theories, though it be at the risk of prolixity or tautology. Observe how the Catholic Religion embraces simply and honestly the view of truth just as it is historically presented in the Scriptures. At the beginning of the Gospel, the Baptist announces “the kingdom of God” at hand. Soon The Great TEACHER appears,—GOD and Man in One Person. HE preaches truths and corrects errors;—but is that all? Does HE leave the truth to propagate itself? Or is it simply a system of Divine Principles, which HE inculcates? Or, has HE not to establish the “Kingdom of heaven?”—Yes, this Heavenly Personage, this no common teacher or prophet, this SON of GOD, had to found among men a celestial community. HE soon began to incorporate a Visible society endowed with invisible powers. HE called twelve men, and ordained them; declared that HE appointed unto them “a Kingdom even as HIS

FATHER had appointed unto HIM a Kingdom ;” staid with them three years; instructed them generally; manifested Himself unto them otherwise than unto the world;” gave them to see “mysteries of the kingdom of GOD;” promised that they should “sit on twelve thrones” as Vicegerents in the spiritual dominion; and ere HE left them, “breathed on them”—“gave them the Holy Ghost,” accompanying it with most extraordinary words—told them to “baptize, and teach whatsoever HE had commanded”—and promised to send HIS SPIRIT to guide them, and in some exalted sense to be HIMSELF “with them” (Matt. xxvii.) to the world’s end.—Acting literally on HIS instructions, the Apostles no sooner received the SPIRIT promised, than they proceeded to set up their spiritual kingdom: First setting forth the truth, according to their Master’s example; then enrolling all who received it as members of their new Society, by means of that literal rite which had been Divinely commanded. And literally did the Apostles accept the statement of their LORD, that HE had given to them “a Kingdom.” Did any man receive their doctrine?—immediately he was addressed in terms like unto the “follow Me” of CHRIST, “Arise and be BAPTIZED”—“have fellowship with US”—“Be ye followers of US.” So systematically at first did they keep “together,” “with one ac-

cord," until much people was "added unto them." (Acts ii. 41—47.) So naturally did they assume¹, and the people allow, their heavenly rule, and Power, that at the outset, as far as possible, every matter of consequence to the new community was transacted by them, personally. Was property sold for the poor?—"they brought the money and laid it at the Apostles' feet." Were distributions made to the needy?—the Apostles themselves did it, as matter of course; till finding it too burdensome, at their own suggestion deputies were appointed for the work. Were new converts added? or did any thing of consequence transpire in distant parts? even in "matters of discipline," and "outward forms and ceremonies?"—it was "reported to the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem." (Acts xv. 2.) And when, in time, Christian communities multiplied in remoter regions, beyond the immediate personal inspection of the Apostles, and their chief companions, subordinate Rulers were instituted; while an Apostle having "the care of all the Churches," travelled from place to place as the organ of the Apostolic government;

¹ Of course there were some that disputed even in their own days the Power of the Apostles themselves.—See 2 Tim. iv. 10, 16; 3 John 10. The Apostles shrank not from asserting their own "POWER which the Lord had given them to edification"—"A Spirit of POWER and of love"—"Not that I have not POWER,"—said St. Paul, (2 Thess. iii. 9.)

visiting again and again the various Christian Societies; giving them the Apostolic traditions (2 Thess. ii. 15.) and directions, "leaving them the decrees for to keep." (Acts xvi. 4.) So indefatigable were the Apostles in carrying out the arrangements of their spiritual kingdom, and so prominent a part of their teaching was this notion of spiritual sovereignty and power, that even their enemies were struck by it, and charged them with setting up another "king, one JESUS" (a charge which would never be brought by unbelievers against the mere teachers of new principles ¹). They taught everywhere, that a membership of their spiritual "kingdom" was necessary to all who would enjoy its peculiar privileges. (Acts ii. 41. 47; 1 John i. 3, 5; ii. 19.) And that membership was attained in the One only way which CHRIST appointed, namely, by Baptism. So that even a new Apostle, fresh called by CHRIST'S voice from heaven, was not deemed a member, or in a state of spiritual privilege with

¹ The manner in which modern sectarians sometimes profess to recognise "only the kingship and headship of CHRIST," affords a striking proof of this; for no one misunderstands *them*, as some did the Apostles, by supposing them to be establishing a temporal rule. The Apostolic system evidently had that in it, which furnished some apparent ground for such a mistake; and so also the Catholic Church is sometimes charged with "interfering with the State."

them—his “sins not washed away,”—till he was baptized. As it was said to St. Paul himself, “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.” (Acts xxii. 16.) All the baptized people, that is, the Christians, or the “Church” of every place, were commanded to “meet together” at stated times. And among those baptized communities, marvellous gifts abounded, which were exercised in their assemblies in a most wonderful manner. (1 Cor. xiv.) But the most gifted of these were alike subjected to the Apostles. “If any man,” said St. Paul, “be spiritual,” still let him submit.—All this, in point of fact, was the manner in which the Apostles acted out the directions of their Master, in establishing the “kingdom of heaven.”

And then, mark in what manner the Apostles put forth, by degrees, their latent spiritual powers. We saw that on the necessity arising, assistants in some minor matters were appointed; but the *Apostles* suggested it. And these assistants (named Deacons) had thereupon the full power of the Apostles, for executing a certain commission; but no more. They were the servants of the Apostles and of the CHURCH; not endowed with the full grace of Apostolicity, but with specific authority to execute certain duties in the Apostles' names.

Had the Apostles found it necessary to appoint other officers, doubtless they would have done it; and so indeed they did, as necessity arose. They “appointed Elders in every city,” (Acts xiv. 23; Tit. i. 5.) still, by letters if not by other means, retaining their own spiritual supremacy over all these scattered communities; here and there, by degrees only, placing a Spiritual Ruler, endowed with full Apostolic power—just as Timothy was “sent” to Ephesus, and Titus “left in Crete,” (Tit. i. 4, 5.) to take the oversight and charge of the Churches and their general teachers. Thus from year to year, with more and more of regularity, arose the kingdom of heaven on earth.

It was indeed a mighty system rising throughout the world, and reduced by slow degrees to regularity and form. But two points seem settled and clear from the very first,—the necessity of Baptism to membership in the Community, and the necessity of the Apostles’ sanction to *every* thing in the Community Universal¹. And these two points being as clear and undeniable as any can possibly be, they simplify and make plain many of the supposed difficulties of that unformed state of things, which must have presented itself

¹ Apost. Can. 37. Ed. Coloniae, 1538.

first of all in the Christian societies. Supposing, for instance, it were even made quite clear, that any Christian man, at first, was permitted to administer Baptism (though there really is no proof of this, but, on the contrary, a great deal against it), yet, knowing, as we do for certain, the Supremacy of the Apostles, we may be sure that no such thing would have been practised without their temporary sanction. The same Apostles who gave Deacons a portion of their power, to “minister to the necessities of saints,” might if they thought fit have given to other Christians, permission to Baptize, in their absence. And this might be more readily accorded to those private Christians who had, as so many had, supernatural gifts. But it took, and plainly must have taken, many years to reduce to uniform order so far spread and rapidly-risen a system as that of the Christian Church. It would take time to ascertain in remote parts the will of the Apostles; and in the interim, doubtless, many confusions would naturally arise, especially in those scarcely-formed Communities which perhaps had no settled Elders or Deacons, much less Bishops. Since, then, the principle is clear, that every Baptized man was held to be a subject of the Apostles’ dominion, i. e. the “kingdom of heaven” or Church, it is plain, that the validity of any act of a ministerial kind would be derived from the

Apostolical permission. And it is on this principle, and this alone, that Lay-Baptism can be said to have had any Primitive sanction. In so far as the Apostle, and afterwards the Bishop, might allow it, it might have a *pro tanto* validity; and so the Bishop was deemed to complete Baptism by laying on his hands in Confirmation. (Acts viii. 17) Such is the language of the early Fathers, not only with respect to Baptism, but every other matter; as for instance, Marriage, which could not be sanctified by Roman Registrars had such existed, but was reckoned base and unchristian unless it had the Bishop's sanction.

From all this you perceive, that, strictly speaking, there is, in theory, but One Order of Ministers necessary to CHRIST'S Church, and that Order, as it consisted of Apostles at first, so it does now of those whom the Apostles left as their Successors, just as CHRIST left Them. The Apostles, it seems, thought fit not to delegate their full authority to many, but only to here one and there one. They might have constituted a plenary Successor of themselves in every congregation of the Baptized, and have created no other Order of Ministers; but they did not so. In that case every ordained man must have been a Bishop, and capable of ordaining others. But the general Unity of their

kingdom would have been interfered with by such a subdivision into petty provinces. Doubtless they were led by the SPIRIT of CHRIST, and His own pattern when among them, to adopt another course; and they created officers with derived and partial powers, to exercise them to a certain extent and no farther. First, they allowed certain persons to Baptize; and then, very soon, they farther permitted others to consecrate the Holy Eucharist and rule the Congregation, and use, in their absence, the powers of binding and loosing souls; of which latter we have on record one very solemn instance: (1 Cor. iv. 5.) “In the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, when ye are gathered together, *and my Spirit—with* the Power of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, deliver such an one unto Satan.” St. Paul thus commissioning others in his absence to act in his name and CHRIST’S. But there was yet one exercise of power which the Apostles reserved to themselves and those of their Coadjutors who, by the voice of all Antiquity, became their Successors in the Church, and that was the power of “laying on of hands.” And thus was accomplished and set in order, by Divine Inspiration, that Threefold Ministry, shadowed forth in CHRIST’S own lifetime, and which has continued ever since.

In the specific reservation of this Power of im-

parting the SPIRIT, which the Apostles made to themselves, there is a sacred beauty and fitness, on which, for a moment, we shall do well to meditate.—By retaining in the possession of themselves, and a chosen few, the whole power of spiritually Commissioning the Ministers of the Church, they effectually provided for the Unity and subordination of their kingdom, and ensured the reverent estimation of their unseen powers, as Vicars of a Heavenly Master. And then this was still farther secured by the retention of the power of Confirmation. For by this it came to pass that every member of the Universal Church, every individual subject of the “kingdom of heaven,” came necessarily into personal contact, so to speak, with him who was the immediate representative of CHRIST. Thus was recognised, in a degree, that intimate union with Apostles or Apostolical men, the contemplation of which in its fulness raised in after days all the eloquent aspirations of St. John Chrysostom. Thus immediately from the hands of Apostles and their Successors every Christian man receives to this hour the higher blessings of CHRIST.—There was a fatherly affection in the appointment; as if the Holy Apostles were anxious, and their Successors after them, to see with their own eyes each one of the uncounted multitude of the great Catholic family. (Acts xx. 28.)

It must not be thought, however, that the ceremony of “laying on of hands” was in itself essential either to Confirmation or Ordination¹. For it is conceivable that any other ceremony might have been adopted. The INTENTION constituted the act of conveyance of the grace of CHRIST, not only in Confirmation, but in Ordination. Otherwise indeed there would be no distinction between the two. So St. Matthias was ordained “by lot;”—and the first Apostles themselves by CHRIST’s “breathing on them.” Otherwise, also, Holy Orders, [if not Confirmation too], would be a proper Sacrament, which it is not, because it was not by CHRIST essentially tied to any form; although it is now virtually so to us by Universal consecrated usage in the Church. In thus speaking of the intention of the Apostles as constituting the validity and essence of the Gift which they conferred, (which it plainly must have done, else all distinctions would have been destroyed, and whenever they laid their hands even on a Deacon, or Deaconess, or a child, full Apostolical grace must have been given, whether they meant it or not; which is absurd,)—it must not be misunderstood as though it were meant to support any Romish Doctrine of Intention. It is just the reverse. For if Holy Orders [or Confirmation]

¹ See the Homily of our Church, on the Common Prayer and Sacraments. And Notes No. II.

were a proper Sacrament, it would have a positive grace specifically annexed to a positive *form*, superseding all intention on the part of the agent. Neither, again, must it be taken to mean that the intention of any particular Bishop is now necessary, to his official action, to secure its validity, as the medium of grace. We are not speaking of any thing personal and private, but of that which may be gathered from the heaven-guided practice—the official and authoritative intention—of the Founders of the CHURCH, in this matter, which has ever, *in fact*, descended to the Bishops, and is not now a mutable thing. Before the decease of the Apostles, “laying on of hands” had become the recognised ceremony of Ordination and Confirmation; and so at length, the Apostle St. Paul, in his later years (A. D. 64, or 65), speaks of the DOCTRINE “of laying on of hands,” (Heb. vi. 2,) which by that time was a known and admitted point of rudimental Christianity.

Towards the close of the Apostolic career the Christian system universal seemed to have become thus arranged with general uniformity of discipline: so that after the destruction of Jerusalem, according to the prophecy, “before that generation passed away,” the “SON of Man came in His kingdom,” with more of fulness, completeness, and

glory than heretofore. While, in the early history of the Acts of the Apostles, we see the elements of the Christian kingdom gradually assembled and composed, neither reason nor history justify us in looking for the complete system of the Apostles until towards the close of their career. Even the extant Epistles to the Churches, seem to indicate various stages in the development of the Christian System. (1 Thess. iii. 10, 11; 1 Cor. xi. 34.) The Apostles imparted of their powers, for the edification of the Body of CHRIST, just as necessity arose and Churches spread, and miracles and gifts supernatural became less frequent. And when they left the world, they left their perpetual power to appointed Successors, in all the great departments of the Spiritual kingdom; bequeathing likewise the promise of the great King of saints, "Lo I am with you always."—And so, at last, (to return to the metaphor of our text,) "All the building was fitly framed together," and grew "into an Holy Temple in the LORD."

Such is the clear historical view of Christianity, and the statement of it is an analytical statement of the Catholic Religion from the beginning. We do not find the facts of Scripture and History to be "difficulties."—But let us now, finally, endeavour to combine what has been said, and briefly

consider, in a more synthetical way, our whole Christianity, as it lies before us both in the Gospels and Epistles.

In the former, CHRIST is instructing His Apostles and witnessing to the Jews. In the latter, the Apostles, "in the person of Christ" (2 Cor. ii. 10), "as though Christ did it by them" (2 Cor. v. 20.), are instructing the CHURCHES, and through them witnessing to the world. The general impression wrought on the mind by the Gospel narrative of CHRIST and His followers, is that of an isolated company of men, having little in common with those by whom they were surrounded, and among whom they moved, as bent on some unearthly enterprise. And in like manner, the impression left by the perusal of an Apostolic Epistle is, of a separated band, a "peculiar people," in the midst of a world "lying in wickedness."—Looking a little closer, we soon recognize a Purity of principle and a Divine mystery alike unsearchable. CHRIST Himself in the Gospel speaks with a heavenly emphasis of those who are endowed with a certain high character, as "BLESSED;" telling us that "their's is the Kingdom of heaven." And every Epistle opens with an exalted delineation of the like persons—the "elect," the "called," the "sanctified," the "BLESSED in

CHRIST JESUS." They who were so addressed were deemed, in a lofty sense, already the heirs of GOD and "joint-heirs with CHRIST," having "received power to become sons of GOD (John i. 12.), and having been Baptismally "born of GOD." (1 John iii. 9.) Each had a Sacred character, yet not as an individual, but as a member of a Sacred Body. Among them there were distinctions, and yet there was an identity; "diversity of gifts," but Oneness of grace. They were "all members one of another," but "all members had not the same office;" they were "one," they were "brethren" in CHRIST (as He had commanded them to be); but some were to "rule," and some to "submit;" some to "overlook" and "watch," and some to "obey."—And the idea of the Oneness of Christians, (and the mysterious nature of it,) seems to pervade the whole New Testament, and is that which forces itself upon our attention, open it wherever we may. Not only did CHRIST pray to His FATHER for this, but He appointed a Mysterious ordinance, by which His people were to become One Body: And another more mysterious still, by which their Oneness might be Divinely sustained. "By ONE SPIRIT ye are Baptized into ONE body;" and "know ye not that the SPIRIT of GOD dwelleth in you?" said St. Paul; as if intimating somewhat which the Baptized might apprehend, but which could not

be spoken. And again, " I speak as to wise men," said the same holy Apostle to the Corinthian Church—glancing only, as it were, at The Mystery of unutterable grace—" I speak as to wise men ; judge ye what I say. The Cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the COMMUNION of the BLOOD of CHRIST ? The Bread which we break, is it not the COMMUNION of the BODY of CHRIST ?" And then he adds—passing from our Union with CHRIST to our Communion with all Saints by means of the Most Holy Eucharist, " We are ONE body, *for* we are all partakers of that ONE Bread !" And in the judgment of the same Apostle, no language seemed too severe to condemn the willing violaters of this Union. It was sacrilege to injure the least of the members ; how much more then to divide the Body ? That the Baptized were " One with CHRIST,"—that the Communicating believer was already, as it were, linked with the verities of eternity,—were transcendent Mysteries ; not bare metaphors, but earthly forms of stating Heavenly Truths. And if every member of CHRIST was thus sacredly looked on, so the more also was the whole Body. " Ye are a chosen generation," says St. Peter, " a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people."—Every Christian indeed was a " Temple of the HOLY GHOST : " but as S. Clement of Alexandria saith, the CHURCH is GOD'S GREAT

Temple—"buildd together for an habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT."

Here, then, is opened to us the great Catholic idea of the Christian Revelation—That the mystical COMPANY of CHRIST's people, as such, were clothed with the heavenly Powers, and "blessed with the heavenly blessings."—It was in the temple "buildd together" that the Divine glory vouchsafed to dwell.—To the Church, the elect assembly, the promises had been made. To the BODY, when in solemn meeting, the special and highest grace of CHRIST had been granted; (and so at the appointed "gatherings together"¹ the Blessed Eucharist was usually celebrated.)—From the beginning of the Gospel this had been indicated, so that even the instituted Apostolate arose, as at CHRIST's command, out of the CHURCH, more as the Divine instrument of Her invisible power, than the possessor of aught in itself². CHRIST's words, "Thou art Peter," were instantly connected with the promise of building the CHURCH against which "the gates of hell should not prevail." The commission, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained," was instantly followed by words

¹ Called, therefore, "the *συναξίς*" in the early Church.

² A similar principle seems hinted, John vii. 22.

conveying this power of absolving and condemning, to the CHURCH, and not to the *persons* of the Apostles¹, except as GOD'S instruments *in* the CHURCH; "*for*," it is directly added, "where two or three are *gathered together* in MY name, there am I." In accordance with which declaration, we see (in a passage before quoted) that an Apostolic condemnation of a sinner was pronounced. "In the name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, when ye (i. e. the Church) are *gathered together*." (1 Cor. v. 4.) In like manner we may trace how, from the first, the highest Authority, as well as sacredness and favour, (Luke xxiv. 33.) was attributed to the "assembling together" of Christians, which therefore they were urged "not to forsake." Thus when the door of faith was first "opened to the Gentiles," the Church was "*gathered together*," (Acts xiv. 27.) and the matter rehearsed. When the question of Judaizing arose, again "the Apostles

¹ This may perhaps throw some light on Tertullian's meaning in a passage quoted by Bishop Kaye, (p. 226.) The word "consessus" seems to allude to the expression of our Lord, "where two or three are *gathered together*;" indeed in the same connexion, he quotes this very text. And I would suggest, that Tertullian's argument in this place, however ill expressed, may perhaps imply, and certainly requires no more than is stated above, viz. that the Sacerdotal grace was primarily or essentially in the CHURCH, and not originally in the *persons* of any individuals as such.

and Elders *came together*." (Acts xv. 6.) When the Apostle St. Peter was to be miraculously delivered from prison, "there were many *gathered together* praying" for him. (Acts xii. 12.) The announcement of the risen SAVIOUR had been made to the "eleven *gathered together*." (Luke xxiv. 33.) And the blessings attendant on these united assemblings was not to be disturbed by Jewish or Gentile jealousies. Since, they had all been "quicken'd *together*, and raised up *together*, and made to sit *together* in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS." (Eph. ii. 5.) And so Christians might be addressed as "heirs *together* of the grace of life;" (1 Pet. iii. 7.) exhorted to be "followers *together*" of the Apostles; (Phil. iii. 17.) and admonished to "strive *together*" for the "faith of the Gospel."

The majestic privileges of the Saints, in Union with CHRIST and Communion with one another, if we contemplated them aright, would so overwhelm our spirits, that we could not think of the "solemn assemblies" without coveting to be there! Little as it is thought of, there is a special awfulness in the "meeting together" of the members of this Heavenly, yet earthly,—this Invisible, yet visible—Society; when GOD'S Eye is on every one, when CHRIST, though unseen, is "in the midst,"—and the "hosts of God" are encamping

around! All Christians then constituting, in some sacred and lofty sense, a “kingdom of Priests¹,”—yet ministering only through that Consecrated organ which CHRIST, the great High Priest, appointed,—the Bishop, or his representative.—“GOD is very greatly to be feared in the Council of the Saints! and to be had in reverence of all that are round about HIM.”—Well might the ancient Fathers delight to speak of the dignity of being a Christian! It is observable, however, for our instruction and warning, even in this, that Tertullian, after he embraced the Montanist heresy, carried out so erroneously the idea we have been dwelling on, as to assign to any Christian, in cases of necessity, the exercise of inherent Priestly functions. Such, even then, was the perilous rashness of Private Judgment. For though the Priestly functions are doubtless in the CHURCH, granted unto Her for Her blessedness and perfection (1 Cor. iii. 22.); and though in our Solemn Assemblies “all the people of the LORD are holy,” all the Baptized in such wise sharers of the Priesthood, that they join in our ‘sacred offerings;’ yet, we must beware of the “gainsaying of Core.” (Jude 11.) The Catholic Church has ever held that Her Priesthood cannot be effectually exercised other-

¹ See Notes, No. V.

wise than in conformity with the original commands and ordinations of Christ. And from HIM alone the first Ministers of the Church derived their appointment, (St. Paul speaking of HIS as “the Ministry received OF THE LORD:” See also Col. iv. 17.), and afterwards conveyed it to others, whom they had chosen, and on whom they “laid their hands.” And thus St. Paul, while anxious to *vindicate and prove to the Church*, as the constituent body, his right to the Ministry, at the same time scruples not to claim and exercise its loftiest Powers *as his own*, (2 Cor. xiii. 10) and commands the Church’s obedience. . . . So mysteriously is “all the building fitly framed together, and groweth into an Holy Temple in the LORD.”

Here let us pause: Let any man recall, in thought, the Scripture language concerning the CHURCH’S privileges, and the MINISTERIAL PREROGATIVES; let him compare it with all that has now been said; then let his mind revert to the notions of the Rationalist; and draw his own conclusion;—And whatever his personal *belief* may be, he will hardly fail to perceive, that the system which is every where supposed throughout the New Testament, differs from a mere code of principles to be “applied” to individuals—differs

in kind,—as widely as the mysterious and appointed Sacrifice of Abel differs from the Rational devotion of Cain.

MAY GOD give us grace to weigh these things ; and “ that not lightly, or after the manner of dissemblers with HIM !” Some, who are not yet members of the Church, may be wishing, perhaps, to put these thoughts far from them, sustaining themselves with the belief, that they *have* partaken of Christian blessings apart from the Church ; and similar reflections. We only say to them, that self-deception on such a matter is but too easy ! And if that be true which we have now literally taken from GOD’S word, then it is certain that they are, at the best, in a very deficient state, and “ come behind in many a good gift !” More than this might indeed be said, without overstepping truth or charity : for those who have heard these things, cannot afterwards be as though they had not. But let each think of it for himself. Whatever may be said of those who are unwittingly out of the “ kingdom of heaven” below, unbaptized, or only doubtfully baptized by some one who had only his *own* authority to do it ; whatever be thought of the present amount of grace, or future reward of such, if they go on according to their best, in the course they find themselves in,—

some of them haply verging on the very borders of our land of promise,—far different is *their* case who *might* have known and embraced the truth. To such we say, in CHRIST'S words, "Verily the kingdom of GOD is come nigh unto you!" . . . The foolish virgins in the parable *thought* their lamps seemed to burn brightly, and emulated the light of the heavenly-wise; but when the Bridegroom came, they were found unsupplied with the needful oil, and went out in utter darkness!

But let not those who are of the "household of faith" be self-confident! "By the grace of GOD, we are what we are!" And let the consciousness of our sinful neglect stir us up to pray for the fuller restoration of the Church's grace to us Her degenerate children. It is of little value to believe in a Priesthood, without we *use* it. May GOD forgive His Priests and people for their joint forgetfulness of their many unearthly privileges!—the very belief whereof seemed a short time since almost dying away from very disuse! Of a truth, we of the English Church are blessed beyond others, would we but apprehend our privileges! Brought nigh, as we are, to our LORD CHRIST, with such abundant mercy and undeserved! If we come short of plenary grace in HIM, what shall we dare to plead in the Day of account?

“What manner of persons ought we to be?” for we have “come unto the City of the Living GOD, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels; to the general Assembly and Church of the first-born enrolled in heaven!—to GOD the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the perfected just; and to JESUS the MEDIATOR of the New Testament, and to the blood of sprinkling!”—Would that the feeling of CHRIST’S first disciples were ours! “LORD, to whom else shall we go? THOU hast the words of eternal life.” Would that we were more thankful to GOD for the present blessings of His Church! Would that we used our Prayers, and tried them well, before we talked of amending them; or understood our holy offices, instead of seeking to shorten them!—Have we now, in this late century, to seek out new faith—some new instructor or guide? GOD deliver us from this blindness! May HE help His people to see what treasures of unknown grace lie hidden in His Holy Church among us! “We have all and abound.” Let us only “give diligence” thereto, that when CHRIST cometh, “we may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless!”

“LORD, I have loved the Habitation of THY House, and the place where THINE honour dwelleth!”—So holy David could say from the very

depths of his soul : and shall we who are brought into a holier place, “the Habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT,” be forbidden to give utterance to as ardent a love—a devotion as deep and pure?—

O HOLY CHURCH OF ENGLAND! Brightest and fairest province of the realm of heaven on earth! What shining paths of truth and holiness are Thine!—And they are thronged by all Thy many Saints, farther than eye can trace through long past ages! What rivers of full grace flow through Thy mighty channels! What living fountains send forth their waters, refreshing evermore the weary and parched soul! Within Thy hallowed walls Thy saintly children trod in the ancient days—(the “old times of which our Fathers have told us”),—they whose monuments of goodness and glory are around us—in whose prayers we pray to the ETERNAL FATHER of all—in whose Psalms “we praise THEE O GOD, we acknowledge THEE to be THE LORD,” from age to age.—O HOLY CHURCH of the many wise and good! O CHURCH of patient Martyrs and godly Confessors!—with whom we hold such mystical Communion, such “fellowship one with another,” that the “blood of CHRIST here cleanseth us!”—To GOD be glory in Thee, O CHURCH of our Land! throughout all ages, world without end! Amen.

NOTES.

NOTES.

No. I.

It seems alike congruous to human nature, and consistent with every Divine dispensation to say, that man is more effectually influenced by the personal instrumentality of his fellow man, than by any other means. Statesmen and politicians seem to have seen this; and in every age have acted upon it; and have thought it necessary to give their sanction and support to a priesthood, even for the attainment of worldly ends. The lower classes of the community also, bear unequivocal testimony to the same truth—the suitability of the living Priesthood as the effective means of influencing human nature. Even among those classes of our own people, who affect to make light of the authority of the Ministry, it is remarkable how much that authority is *felt* after all; and how much even the systematic rejecters of the established Priesthood, are accustomed to impute high power and efficacy to the ministrations, and often to the very persons, of their own self-sent ministers. Books have their use—but Man directly influences man, in a more vital way.

And more than this. Some men *naturally* influence their fellows more than others: and some men *Divinely*; that is by Divine appointment. It is true, for instance, that by the very necessity of our social nature and condition, we affect one another in a very important degree; and that it is even a duty sometimes to exert our moral influence on our

brethren. And the degree in which we are able to accomplish this, will be variously determined. But beyond the natural influence which we thus exercise, there is an instituted influence, as much a matter of *fact* as the former. Keeping to the religious view of this question only, I would thus further explain :

It is evident that in every age, one man may be a blessing to another, by personally instructing him to the best of his power : or by praying for him, to Almighty God. Every good man may possess this power of mediately blessing his fellow men ; but some men more than others.—A Howard may thus bless very “effectually.” And, generally, the “effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” But some there have been in every age, who, according to the Divine testimony, have had POWER to give authoritative blessing. (1 Sam. iii. 19.) Some have been from time to time appointed and endowed by the DEITY, “to bless, and to curse, in the name of the LORD.” (1 Chron. xxiii. 13.) Generally this was the assigned function of the Priesthood, and was declared to pertain to them “for ever.” But “from the beginning it was so ;” Job blessed his three friends, (Job xlii. 8.) and Noah his sons, (Gen. ix.) and before the Levitical priesthood was set up, Melchisedec “blessed Abraham.” Isaac “blessed Jacob and could not reverse it” though he heartily wished to do so : and Joseph, again, blessed his two sons, *officially*, and contrary to his own intention. (Gen. xlviii. 9.) Balaam, we see, also, was sent for to “curse” Israel, and he “blessed them altogether,” though he wished not to do it : (Num. xxii. 11.) so that it was no peculiar privilege of the Jewish nation or their ancestors to be able to impart an authoritative blessing. (Matt. xxiii. 3.) And we find the same to hold in the Christian dispensation. (Acts x. 41.) Being reviled “we bless,” said the Apostle. Say “PEACE be to this house,” was our LORD’s direction to His Ministers ; “and if the Son of peace be there, YOUR PEACE shall rest upon it.” So that at the end of his epistles St. Paul *sends* his

Apostolic blessing "under his own hand." And "without all contradiction (he argues) the less is blessed of the better." (Heb. vii. 7. Deut. xxi. 5 ; xxvii. 14.) All men can pray for blessing, but *some* can "bless." So, every man can *read* "the Absolution," but "God hath given POWER and commandment to HIS MINISTERS, to declare and PRONOUNCE it." (So St. James says, "If any man (not, if any *poor* man, only, as some seem to take it) be sick, let him call for the Priests of the CHURCH.")—And this depends not on the goodness of the MAN. A Judas was an Apostle.

Let any one follow out in his own mind these hints ; and he will see nothing either unphilosophical or unscriptural in expecting in these days also the blessings of an instituted Priesthood. God's plan ever is, to use *men* as instruments of good to men. Revelation has ever recognized such an institute as the living Ministry. All infidelity is an attempt at "codification."

II.

AT the close of the fourth Lecture I have made some observations on the INTENTION of the Church Catholic, as constituting, in a measure, the essence of the validity of certain of Her Ordinances. It will be difficult to clear this statement from the possibility of misrepresentation, and even misapprehension : I would request that what I have said at p. 128, &c. may be re-read and considered. The Doctrine of Laying on of hands is recognized in Scripture ; but there is no command of CHRIST concerning this, in the same way that there is a command concerning Baptism and the Eucharist. It seems an institute of the Apostles and the Primitive Church ; and may perhaps be looked on as an instance of the early exercise of the Church's inherent power and grace ; for the institute certainly received the sanction of Scripture, before the close of the Sacred Canon. So that it would be impossible to say

how dangerous it might not be, to depart from the Church's Ordinance of Laying on of hands. I trust therefore that none will imagine, that what is here said can fairly be made to sanction the loose notion, that any part of the Church Catholic can now voluntarily originate and ordain a Ministry in a *new* way; and without imposition of hands. The uncertainty, not to say peril of presumption in any such case, will be quite sufficient to guard against the fatal folly of such a thought. How far the grace of the Apostolate is ordinarily now allied even to the very *act* of "laying on of hands," it may be impossible to say; still it is important in many respects to observe, that the Laying on of hands is not so strictly of the nature of a proper sacrament, as that the divine grace is always necessarily allied to that form of ordination exclusively. There is advantage in considering that in *theory* it may not be so, though there could be no safety or certainty in deliberately *acting* on such a doubtfully understood theory.

Even the Roman Controversialists do not agree that the Laying on of hands is *the* specifically Sacramental act;—the outward form to which only of necessity the inward grace is allied. Though I cannot help thinking that it would much benefit their argument, if they were agreed on this point. The Doctrine which attributes the essence of Ordination to the uniform Intention of the Church Catholic may be, of course, very easily cavilled at; but still even the Romanist must, to a certain extent, rely on some such Doctrine, and such a Doctrine is that, perhaps, which alone will harmonize the conflicting Roman theories. In its very nature it is a Doctrine which admits not of strict definition. It rises simply out of the truth, that the gifts of CHRIST were to the CHURCH, and not primarily or inherently in individuals, as such.

This theoretical conception of these ordinances will serve greatly to assist us in meeting a theoretical difficulty, not unfrequently brought against the Doctrine of the Succession. It is said: 'Is it not very conceivable, after all that has been urged, that during the long course of ages, in *some* countries

at least, some one break in the Apostolic chain *might* have occurred? Is it not a consequence, in that case, that all subsequent Ordinations would be very doubtful?' To which we reply, 'Point out *the fact*.' We challenge you to find it; a bare supposition can have but little force as an argument. And then, supposing the fact to be discovered, That a certain Bishop had obtained his place in the Church by invalid means—what is the consequence? Could he perpetuate such an invalid Succession? Certainly not; for in Ordaining others, he would be associated with *two* other Bishops, whose valid grace would confer true Orders, notwithstanding the inefficacy of the third coadjutor in the Ordination. But, putting the case at the very worst, even if such an instance could be found, it would only affect the condition of the single Church over which the nominal Bishop presided; and that only so far as the particular functions of that Bishop were concerned; and it would be corrected at his death. And all this may be urged in reply even by Romanists. But we who deny Holy Orders to be a proper Sacrament of CHRIST, can add more than this. We suggest, that in the case of a Bishop obtaining his place in the Church by some invalid means, which the Church had mistaken for valid, the Church's INTENTION might avail sufficiently, for the time being at least, to counteract the effects of man's sin; and so give value even to the ministrations of the Church which had been so severely visited, as to have such a Bishop set over them. So we meet the theoretical difficulty by a theoretical answer.

III.

IT is not unusual with those who are more anxious to make difficulties than to understand the Catholic truth, to speak of the "vagueness of the rule of S. Vincent," and the arduousness of the task imposed by the Doctors of the *Via Media* on all their scholars. That it is easy enough to construct a theo-

retical difficulty of this sort, no one will question. But it behoves every Christian to consider well, whether any "dilemmas of Churchmen" can be stated which might not (without any very great ingenuity) be turned into 'Dilemmas of CHRISTIANS.' Doubtless it is a *trial*, (and GOD intended it to be so, 1 Cor. xi. 19.) to see so many diversities and divisions in the Church; yet candid judges will hardly decide, that English Churchmen have more difficulties of this kind than other men; or that we should be likely to escape similar "dilemmas" by forsaking the CHURCH for any other community. And in spite of the ingenuity of men, common sense will generally understand the practical use and application of S. Vincent's rule, "Quod semper," &c. An instance of the ordinary manner of its practical employment, may be seen, to a certain extent, in Lecture II. p. 51, and will suggest at once to the minds of many, the way in which the English Churchman can and does proceed. Difficult as the theory of the *Via Media*, and the popular recognition of truth by S. Vincent's test may in theory be made to seem; yet it is, I imagine, practically and as a matter of experience acted on, to a much wider extent, both in our own Church and the *Roman*, than is commonly noticed, or thought of. In illustration, the twenty-first chapter of St. Luke might be advantageously consulted. Our LORD there assumes (what in fact is daily seen) that heresies should arise. And He tells His people not to follow the "Lo here is CHRIST!" and "Lo there!" Of course it might always be easy to say—which is THE CHURCH?—and, which is the heresy?—The "Lo here!" But that is a difficulty which our LORD did *not* entertain. It has very little existence in fact and experience. Every man, generally speaking, knows whether he is in "the Church." Though, of course, there is such a thing as a "strong delusion;" (2 Thess. ii. 11.) The whole of our LORD's address in this chapter is one which the Catholic Church *feels* the power of. It is full of "*difficulty*," and "uncertainty, and vagueness," to Sectarians only, who have no test whereby they can be sure that they are not the very persons aimed at by our LORD,

as following false and *new* teachers. It seems to me, that the Sectarian *cannot* act upon CHRIST's directions in this chapter. Nay they *must* have, to him, all the vagueness and uncertainty which he charges on the Catholic rule. "Keep to the ancient Apostolic way; mind not novelties; 'Go not after them.' Keep to the 'Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus,' in opposition to every 'Lo here is Christ!'"

IV.

THE holy Apostle St. Paul, good children, in the tenth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, writeth on this fashion: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD, shall be saved. But how shall they call on Him on Whom they believe not? How shall they believe on Him of Whom they have not heard? How shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they preach except they be Sent?" By the which words St. Paul doth evidently declare unto us two lessons.

The first is, that it is necessary to our salvation to have Preachers and Ministers of God's most holy word, to instruct us in the true faith and knowledge.

The second is, that Preachers must not run to this high honour before they be called thereto, but they must be ordained and appointed to this office, and sent to us by God. For it is not possible to be saved, or to please God, without faith; and no man can truly believe in God by his own wit, (for of ourselves we know not what we should believe) but we must needs hear God's word taught us by other.

Again, the Teachers, except they be called and Sent, cannot fruitfully teach. For the seed of God's word doth never bring forth fruit, unless the LORD of the harvest do give increase, and by His HOLY SPIRIT do work with the sower. But God doth not work with the preacher whom He hath not sent, as St. Paul saith.

. . . . Wherefore, good children, to the intent you may steadfastly believe all things which GOD by His ministers doth teach and promise unto you, and so be saved by your faith, learn diligently I pray you, by what words our LORD JESUS CHRIST gave this commission and commandment to His ministers, and rehearse them here, word for word, that so you may print them in your memories, and recite them the better when you come home. The words of CHRIST be these :

“ OUR LORD JESUS breathed on His disciples and said, Receive the HOLY GHOST ; whose sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them ; and whose sins you reserve, they are reserved.”

. . . . Now, good children, that you may the better understand these words of our SAVIOUR CHRIST, you shall know that our LORD JESUS CHRIST, when He began to preach, He did call and choose His twelve Apostles ; and afterward, besides those twelve, He sent forth threescore and ten disciples, and gave them authority to preach the Gospel. And after CHRIST’S ascension, the Apostles gave authority to other godly and holy men to minister GOD’S word, and chiefly in those places where there were Christian men already, which lacked preachers, and the Apostles themselves could no longer abide with them : for the Apostles did walk abroad into divers parts of the world, and did study to plant the Gospel in many places. Wherefore where they found godly men, and meet to preach GOD’S word, they laid they hands upon them, and gave them the HOLY GHOST, as they themselves received of CHRIST the same HOLY GHOST to execute this office.

And they that were so ordained, were indeed, and also were called the ministers of GOD as the Apostles themselves were, as Paul saith unto Timothy. And so the ministration of GOD’S word (which our LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself did first institute) was derived from the Apostles, unto other after them, by imposition of hands and giving the HOLY GHOST, from the Apostles’ time to our days. And this was the consecration, orders, and unction of the Apostles, whereby they, at the be-

ginning, made Bishops and Priests ; and this shall continue in the Church, even to the world's end.

Wherefore, good children, you shall give due reverence and honour to the Ministers of the Church, and shall not meanly or lightly esteem them in the execution of their office, but you shall take them for GOD'S Ministers, and the Messengers of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. For CHRIST Himself saith in the Gospel, "He that heareth you, heareth ME ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth ME." Wherefore, good children, you shall steadfastly believe all those things, which such Ministers shall speak unto you from the mouth and by the commandment of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. And whatsoever They do to you, as when They BAPTIZE you, when They give you ABSOLUTION, and distribute to you the BODY and BLOOD of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, these you shall so esteem as if CHRIST Himself, in His own person, did speak and minister unto you. For CHRIST hath commanded His ministers to do this unto you, and He Himself (although you see Him not with your bodily eyes) is present with His ministers, and worketh by the HOLY GHOST in the administration of His Sacraments. And on the other side you shall take good heed and beware of false and privy preachers, which privily creep into cities, and preach in corners, having none authority, nor being called to this office. For CHRIST is not present with such preachers, and therefore doth not the HOLY GHOST work by their preaching ; but their word is without fruit or profit, and they do great hurt in commonwealths. For such as be not called of God, they, no doubt of it, do err, and sow abroad heresy and naughty doctrine.—CRANMER'S "Catechismus." Edit. 1548. *A Sermon of the authority of the Keys.*—See also *Jewel's Apology*, pp. 28, &c. Ed. 1829.

V.

THE arguments used in p. 87, 88, &c. respecting the Priesthood of CHRIST, still manifesting the One Sacrifice of CHRIST

in the Church, may serve incidentally to illustrate the error of the Romanists respecting both the Priesthood and the Sacrifice. St. Paul certainly implies that an *analogy* exists between the Ministers and their functions in the respective Churches of the Jews and Christians. And in implying an *analogy*, he evidently takes for granted that there is not an *identity*. The Romanist seems to overlook this: his error is truly a Judaizing error; and it seems to result from a virtual forgetfulness, that the ONE great Sacrifice "once for all" *has been* offered, and that the Christian Priesthood has only continuously to "manifest" it. In speaking of the "Priesthood" of the Church, and the Eucharistic "Sacrifice," we certainly imply that the Christian Presbyter has truly holy functions to perform, in respect of the great atoning Sacrifice, *analogous* to those of the Jewish priest: but we must be careful not to make them *identical*. St. Paul, in the epistle to the Hebrews, evidently assumes the analogy, but his argument is wholly inconsistent with the notion of identity. The Christian Priest cannot "sacrifice," in a Jewish sense of the word; but in a much better. So it may be truly said, that he has to "offer" continually The Sacrifice once made by The DIVINE HIGH PRIEST. (Gal. iii. 1.) But the term "offering," among primitive writers, is used *generally*; and does not exclusively refer to the Consecrated Elements alone.—See note E. in the former series of "Parochial Lectures," on the Holy Catholic Church. There is some historical light thrown on our own Church's view of this subject by the volume just published by the Principal of St. Alban's Hall, Oxford, comparing the two Liturgies of King Edward VI.—Oxford, 1838.

THE END.

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